

PART I.

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6/48

THE HISTORY



FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD OF THE
IRISH ANNALS,
TO
THE REBELLION OF 1848.

BY
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&c. &c. &c.

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TANNICA LITERARIA," "ESSAYS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE LITERATURE, HISTORY,
AND SUPERSTITIONS OF ENGLAND IN THE MIDDLE AGES," AND OTHER
WORKS ILLUSTRATIVE OF ENGLISH HISTORY.

*Illustrated with beautiful Steel Engravings, chiefly from
Original Drawings, executed expressly for
this Work,*

By H. WARREN, Esq.,
PRESIDENT OF THE NEW WATER COLOUR SOCIETY.

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PATRICIVS

HIBERNIA

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND.

OPINIONS OF THE PUBLIC PRESS.

NORTHERN STAR.

AN impartial and trustworthy history of Ireland would be one of the most valuable and interesting works that author and publisher combined could present to the public. In the "address" which accompanies the first part of this publication, it is truly said, that "There exists at present no history of Ireland of a character to be placed in the hands of the general reader. Works of this kind, hitherto published, are either imperfect in plan, defective in research, or disfigured by the political or religious prejudices of the writers." The "address" adds: "It will be the especial aim of the author of the present work to avoid this dangerous rock; he will endeavour to give as far as the materials will permit, a true picture of Irish history; and he will study, above all, to relate the stirring events which come beneath his pen, as well as the causes which have led to them, and the effects which have followed, with the strictest impartiality." To get at the truth of events which have been disfigured by the mystifications of "history," is at the best a laborious, and often a hopeless undertaking. Of Mr. Wright's ability there can be no question. We trust that when this publication is brought to a close the same may be as truly asserted of his allegiance to truth, in spite of sect or party. If the author of this "History of Ireland" produces a work such as the "address" we have quoted from promises, he will confer a lasting benefit upon society. It affords us pleasure to speak favourably of the work thus far. It is printed with large clear type on good paper, and the embellishments are of the first class. We may conscientiously recommend this "History of Ireland" to our readers.—October 28, 1848.

STANDARD OF FREEDOM.

A COMPLETE history of Ireland is indeed a desideratum in literature. The author of such a work must be no ordinary man. He must be superior to the prejudices and predilections of partizanship, and be enabled to take a calm and philosophic view of the important events which have occupied the public attention during the last sixty years. He must overstride the barrier of creeds and races, and must deal impartially with both the English and Irish nations. Whether the present author is likely to accomplish what is demanded of the historian of the sister kingdom, we cannot, of course undertake to decide, since only two numbers of the work have appeared, but we will confess, that up to the present point, we are satisfied with his labours. The second part brings down the history to the siege of Dublin in 1171, by Dermot King of Leinster. The two parts contain some excellent engravings and an accurate map of Ireland.

WEEKLY CHRONICLE.

A HISTORY of Ireland is very much required. There is no such thing, soberly speaking, in the language. We have plenty of sketches of different periods and of different parties, but any comprehensive history written in an impartial spirit we have not. Mr. Wright, we trust, will fill this literary gap worthily. We cannot judge of the merits of the work by the present number, which is beating about in the obscure dreamland of remote antiquity; but if the handsome manner in which the work is "got up" is any guarantee for the literary merit with which it will be conducted, the History of Ireland will become a standard work.—October 22, 1848.

DISPATCH.

A GOOD history of the sister island was much wanted. Moore's was a failure; but the one now before us promises to supply the desideratum. Mr. Thomas Wright is the author; and he is fully competent for the task entrusted to him. The work is brought out in shilling parts, illustrated with beautiful steel engravings, executed expressly for the publication; and as far as good matter, good pictures, good print, and good paper, can help to make a book successful, this one possesses all those advantages.—October 22, 1848.

LLOYDS.

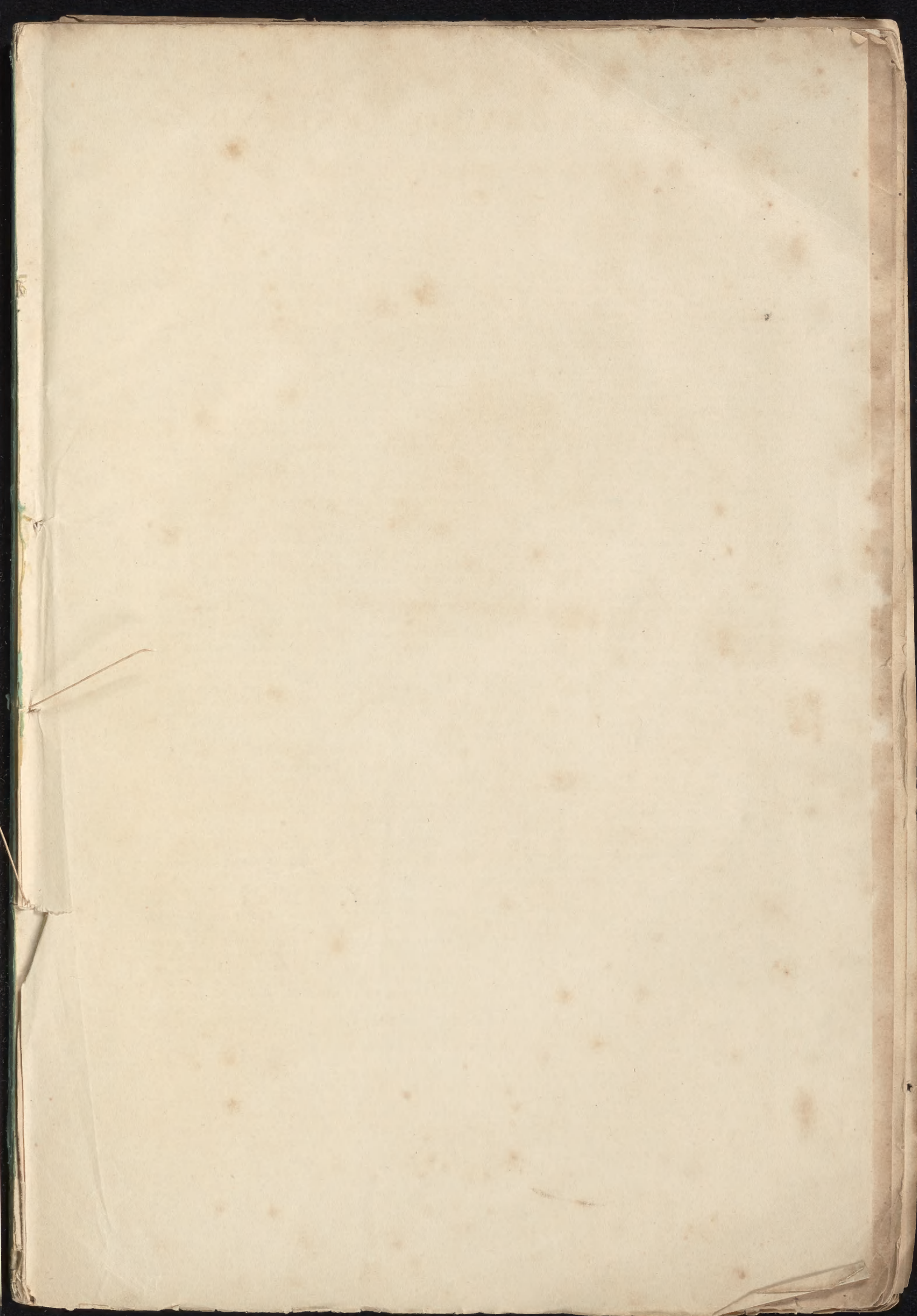
SETTING aside the great interest occasioned by Irish affairs at the present moment, the advent of this history of Ireland, from the pen of a gentleman whose talent and archæological researches so peculiarly fit him for such a task, is a thing to afford much gratulation; for we agree with the "address," when it says that there exists at present no history of that country of a character to be placed in the hands of the general reader. Political and religious prejudices have done much to disfigure and distort facts relating to the stirring events which form such peculiar features in Irish history; and we may hope, at least, that Mr. Wright will divest them of that veil in which prejudice and bigotry—influencing the pens of all past historians—have so closely shrouded them, to the utter confusion and ignorance of the reader. Judging from the portion before us (the first part), we venture to say the work will become very popular; and its chances of success will be enhanced by the possession of some beautiful engravings, from the pencil of Mr. Warren: that of the capture of Lord Edward Fitzgerald deserves to be particularly mentioned. The work is beautifully printed, and the price is within the reach of almost everybody. We shall watch the progress of this history with considerable interest.—October 15, 1848.

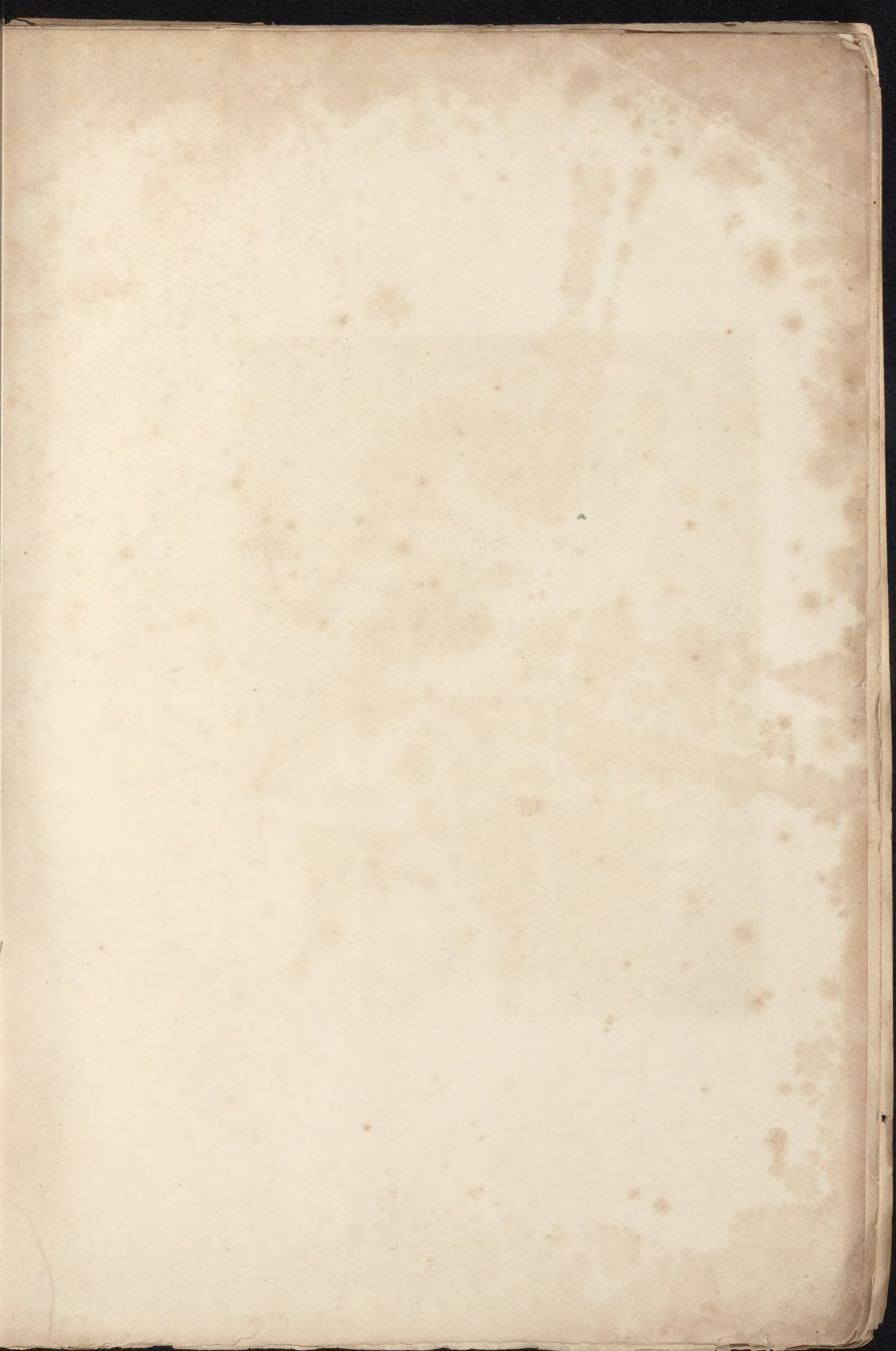
LADY'S NEWSPAPER.

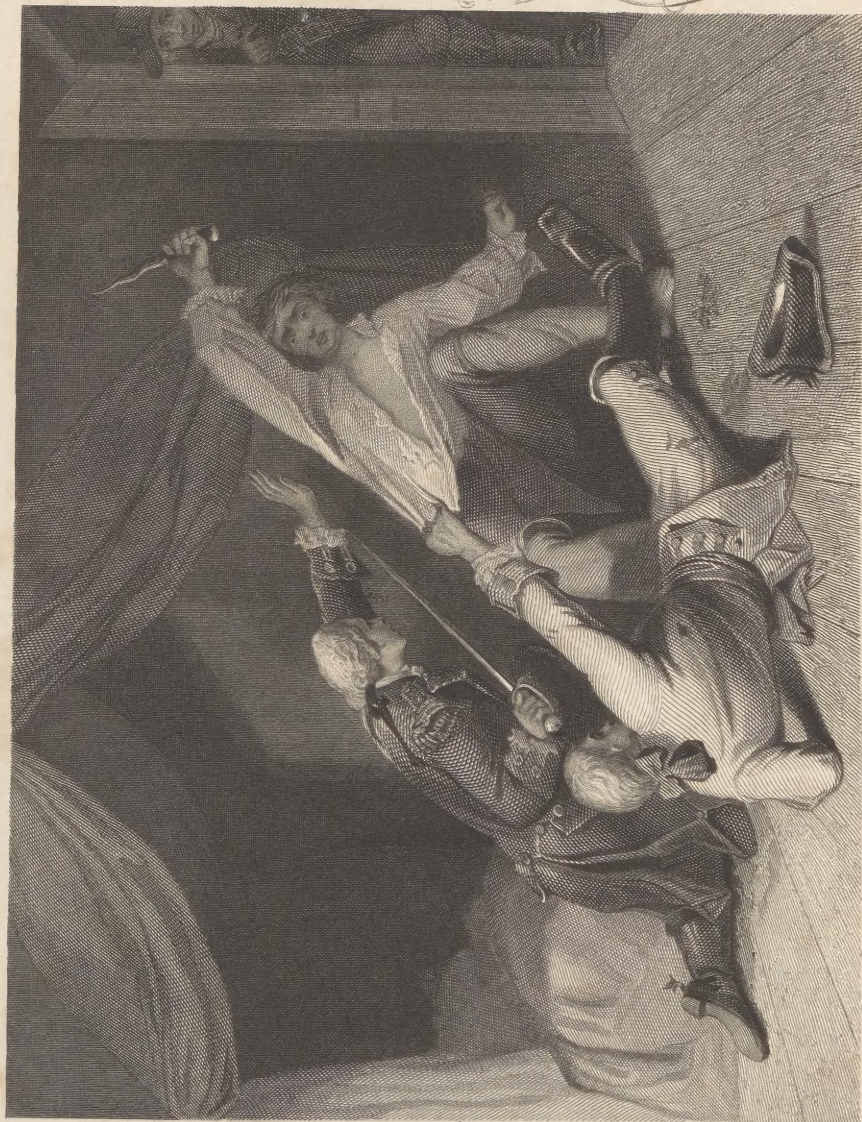
THIS is a cheap publication, and, as far as we can judge from this specimen, a good one. We shall be able to speak more definitely as it proceeds. At present we are only on the threshold of the history.—October 14, 1848.

THE WORCESTERSHIRE CHRONICLE.

AMONG literary and archæological pioneers we recognise Mr. Wright, the able and well-known author of the work before us—a gentleman who brings to his task the possession of every qualification necessary to the high office of an historian. Perhaps to no work would the constant and vigilant exercise of caution be more essential than to the history of Ireland. Mr. Wright has exhibited much research, as also care and judgment, in the first number of his work, which of course treats of the mythic period. It is evidently not his intention to make the work a learned one, *par excellence*, but to bring it within the reach, as well of the understandings as of the pockets of the general public. The history will be brought up to the period of the rebellion of 1848. In this brief review we must not fail to notice the very superior manner in which the publisher and printer have executed their portion of the task; and the frontispieces consist of fine engravings of "The capture of Lord Edward Fitzgerald for high treason," "George the Fourth's visit to Ireland," and a map of the country, which alone are worth the very low cost of the number.—October 18, 1848.

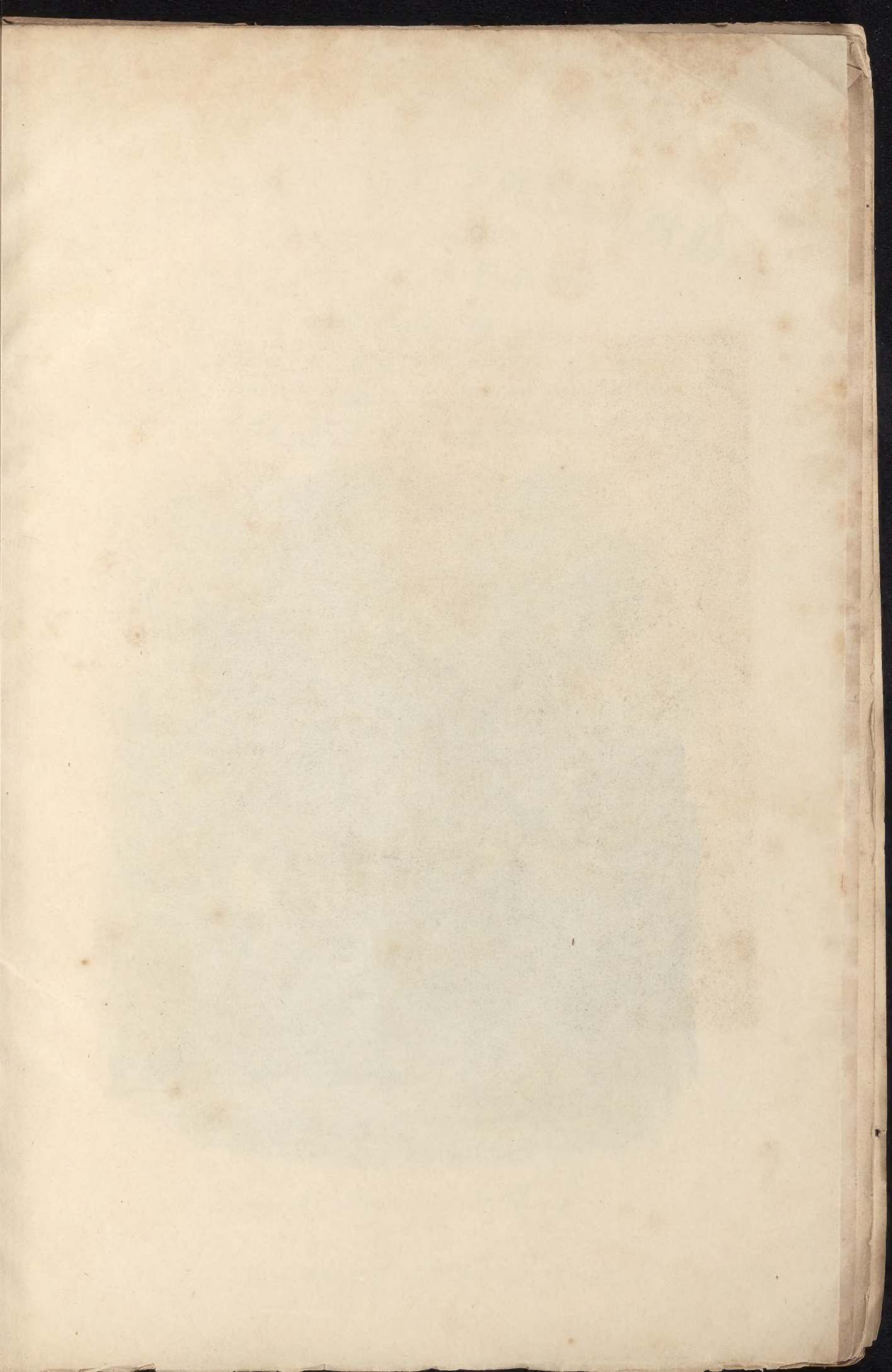






THE CAPTURE OF LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD FOR HIGH TREASON.

J. & F. TALLIS, LONDON, EDINBURGH, & DUBLIN.

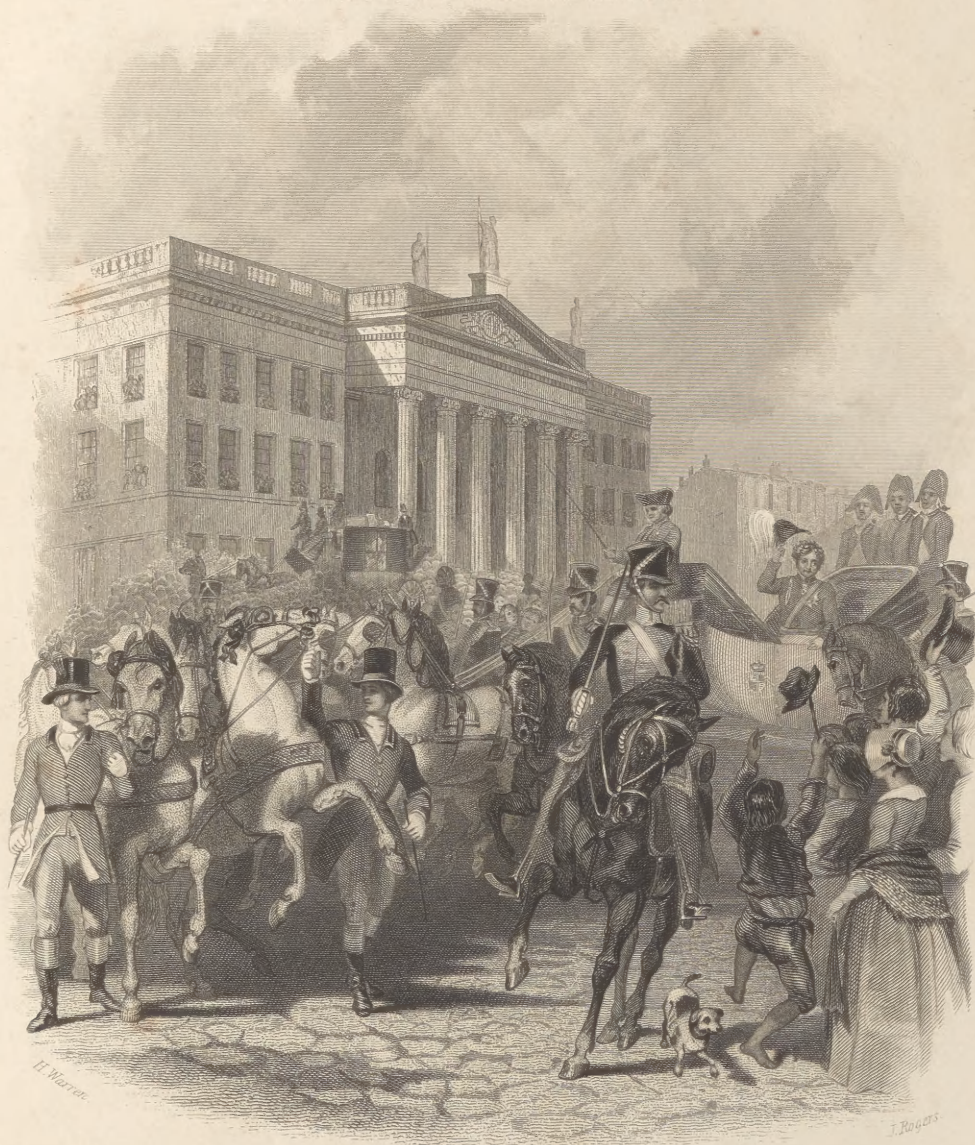


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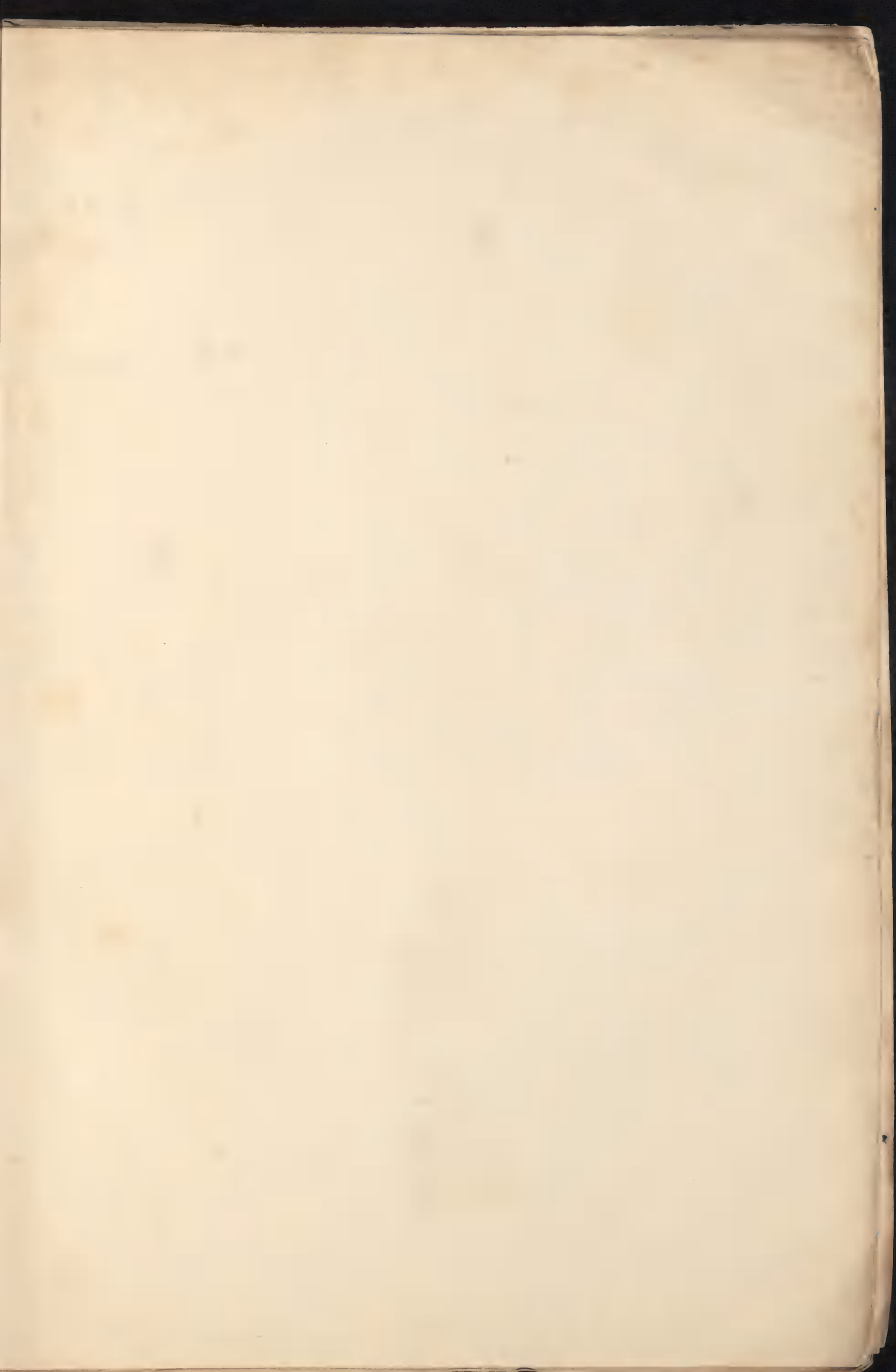
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AND OTHER WORKS ILLUSTRATIVE OF ENGLISH HISTORY.



George Meade visits No Ireland

AUGUST 12TH 1821.

J. & F. TALLIS, LONDON, EDINBURGH, & DUBLIN.



IRELAND.



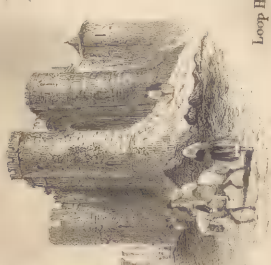
S^t. PATRICK'S, DUBLIN



The Map Drawn & Engraved by J. Rapin.

J & F TALLIS, LONDON, ELINBURGH & DUBLIN.

The Illustrations by J. Merchant & Engraved by J. Rogers



ROSS CASTLE, LAKE OF KILLARNEY.

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THE HISTORY OF IRELAND.

BOOK I.

HISTORY OF IRELAND PREVIOUS TO THE CONQUEST BY THE NORMANS.

CHAPTER I.

IRELAND AS KNOWN TO THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.



HEⁿ we carry our inquiries far back into the history of most modern nations, we arrive eventually at a period when the materials of history become so rare and indistinct, that it is necessary to arrange and classify them with more than ordinary care and minuteness, and even after that classification, they afford only a weak and doubtful light. These materials, however, are naturally separated into three grand divisions, which ought to be kept perfectly distinct from each other. We have, first, the accounts given by contemporary writers of other countries, then in a more advanced state of civilization; these are the most valuable materials, but they are more or less copious according to a variety of circumstances. In the absence of written documents belonging to the people whose history we are treating, we have the numerous and various articles which they made and used—arms, and domestic implements, and personal ornaments, yielded up to us by the earth on which they trod, and found more especially in their graves. The comparison of these articles, which form our second class of materials, is the more special province of the archæologist; although the

most authentic of all, they tell but half their story without written documents, and it is only by a careful collation with the similar monuments of other peoples, in different circumstances, that we obtain, to a certain extent, a view of the domestic manners, the national habits, and the state of civilization, of the particular people to whom they belonged. The third class of materials, which is much less to be depended upon than the others, is far more copious and attractive; it consists of the historical traditions of a much later age, which are at best but the work of poets and minstrels, though they form the earlier part of the written annals of all countries.

It is necessary, for the interest of truth, to consider each of these classes of materials separately. The two first assist each other mutually, because they are contemporary and truth-telling monuments; but the third belongs to the romance of history, and the indiscreet adoption of it has chiefly given its character to what is commonly called the mythic period of the history of nations.

The early allusions to Ireland found in the classic writers of antiquity are extremely vague: with them this island of the far west stood somewhat in the same position, in a geographical point of view, as that held in

modern times by Patagonia or any other extreme point, visited occasionally by the mariner in search of water or traffic, but as yet only partially explored. The earliest geographical notions of the Greeks are found in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, and more especially in that singular cycle of romance which celebrated the expedition of the Argonauts, the oldest account of which is found in a poem published under the name of the fabulous Orpheus, and believed to have been written about five hundred years before Christ. The geographical knowledge possessed by the Greeks at this period was confined within a very limited circle. Italy was its boundary to the west, and they believed that the Euxine opened to the north into the ocean which encircled the whole earth. According to the poem just alluded to, the Argonauts passed from the Pontus Euxinus into the northern ocean, here called the Cronian Sea, and after a variety of adventures, they arrived at islands (for the name is used in the plural as well as in the singular,) named Iernides (*νήσοισιν Ἰερνίδων*), situated on the Atlantic ocean, and which can only apply to the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland. The adventurers are here overtaken by a violent storm, which carries them out into the ocean, and after escaping various perils, they at length reach in safety the pillars of Hercules, and enter the Mediterranean. A hundred and fifty years later, about the middle of the fourth century before Christ, Aristotle, in his treatise de Mundo, speaks almost as vaguely as his predecessors, of the two large islands in the western ocean, called "the British Isles," and consisting of Albion and Ierne (*Ἀλβιον καὶ Ἰέρνη*).

Long before this period the Phœnicians of Syria had become the merchants of the world; they were establishing their colonies along the southern shores of the Mediterranean, and their voyages extended beyond the straits to the south and north far along the coasts of Africa and Europe. They visited the British isles at an early period, allured thither by the valuable metals found in them; and it was no doubt to them that the Greeks owed their slight and vague knowledge of Ierne and Albion.

The next Greek writer who mentions Ierne is the geographer Strabo, who wrote about half a century before the birth of our Saviour. He tells us simply that this isle was situate on the other side of Britain, and that it was ill inhabited on account of the

coldness of the climate. Strabo's great contemporary, Julius Cæsar, the first Roman invader of Britain, tells us that Ireland is one-half less than its sister island, but confesses that he could gather no certain information relating to it. But in the middle of the first century of the Christian era, the Roman writers begin to show a better knowledge of this island, which Cæsar had already spoken of by its Latin name of Hibernia. Mela, still labouring under the prejudices of the Greeks, describes it as nearly equal in size to Britain, but he asserts that the severity of its climate hindered the fruits of the earth from coming to maturity, although its herbage was so luxuriant ("green Erin") that it was necessary to allow the cattle only a short portion of the day for grazing, lest they should over-eat themselves. Strabo had expressed his opinion of the barbarism of the inhabitants of Ierne, by informing us that they eat human flesh, and that the sexes lived in promiscuous intercourse, without paying attention even to the ties of blood. Mela tells us that the Irish of his time were so uncivilized, that they were equally without sense of virtue or of religion; and Solinus, who describes them as an inhospitable and warlike people, and gives several other instances of their barbarism, assures us that they made no distinction between right and wrong. Their cannibalism seems to have been almost proverbial; it is alluded to by Diodorus Siculus; and St. Jerome, at a much later period, declares that in his youth he had seen Scots or Irishmen exhibited in Gaul, eating human flesh.

But with the establishment of the Roman power in Britain, Ireland soon began to be better known to the Romans, not only through the communications which must always have existed between the two islands, but through the more general resort of merchants to its numerous ports. Tacitus describes it as being a smaller island than Britain, but as resembling it in climate and the character and manners of its inhabitants, though he speaks of the comparison as unfavourable to the Irish. Its approaches and harbours, he says, were better known through the merchants who frequented them, than those of Britain. From this author we learn that the Irish were already weakened by those domestic feuds which have ever since proved their bane. One of the native chieftains, driven away in consequence of these feuds, had, in the year 82, taken shelter with Agricola, the Roman governor of Britain,

who, at his suggestion, made preparations for the invasion of Ireland, in order to reduce it under the Roman yoke, which he was assured he might easily effect with a single legion and a few auxiliaries. Agricola had already made his preparations, and collected his army of invasion on the nearest coast of Britain, when he appears to have been called off from his design by affairs of still greater importance. The poverty of our information relating to the history of our island under the Romans, leaves it doubtful whether the Roman armies subsequently passed into Ireland or not; but Juvenal, in a remarkable passage of his second satire, speaks of his countrymen as having carried their arms beyond the Irish shores.*

In the geographical tables of Ptolemy, published soon after the date of the two last-mentioned writers, about A.D. 120, Ireland is laid before our eyes in a more distinct form, and we are made acquainted with the principal points of the coasts, as well as the principal ports to which the merchants traded, the chief towns of the island, and the different tribes whose territories bordered on the sea. Ptolemy used chiefly the later Greek authorities, and he is believed to have derived his information relating to the western extremities of the world as then known, directly or indirectly, from the merchants who frequented them; his account is the more worthy of our attention, as it forms the first authentic starting-point for the history of Ireland.†

This geographer, whose representation of the form of the island is much less incorrect than might be expected, begins his survey with the northern side, at what he calls the Northern Promontory or Cape, answering to a headland on the coast of Donegal, still known popularly as the North Cape. He proceeds thence to the east, to what he calls Cape Venicnium, which perhaps answers to the modern Malin Head; he then names in succession the mouths of two rivers, which he calls Vidua and Argita, supposed to be the Foyle and the Bann; and he ends his description of this coast with Cape Robogdium, believed to be Fair-Head, in the vicinity of the Giant's Causeway. Two distinct tribes

are mentioned by Ptolemy as occupying the country bordering on this line of coast, and giving their name to the extreme promontories, the Venicnii and the Robogdii; the former inhabited the county of Donegal, the latter those of Londonderry and Antrim. Ptolemy knew of no town on this coast.

Proceeding along the western coast, from the northern cape, Ptolemy mentions first, the mouth of the river Ravius, supposed to be the modern Guibarra. A considerable town (*πόλις ἐπίσημος*), at which he next arrives, and which he calls Magnata, appears to answer to the site of Donegal. Then follow in succession five rivers, the Libnius (or, according to one editor, Libeius), answering probably to Sligo Bay; the Ausoba, perhaps the bay of Killala; the Senus, perhaps Clew or Newport Bay; the Dur, which seems to answer to the bay of Galway; and the Iernus, which there can be little doubt is the Shannon. Beyond these was the Southern Promontory, which is supposed to correspond with Dunmore Head. The tribes enumerated by Ptolemy as inhabiting this line of coast are the Erdini or Erpeditani, whose territory adjoined to that of the Venicnii; the Magnatæ, who occupied the neighbourhood of Donegal, the site of their chief town, which took its ancient name from them; the Auteri, who held the district extending from the county of Donegal to that of Sligo; the Gangani, who inhabited the county of Mayo; and the Velibori, or Ellebri, who held the district lying between Galway and the Shannon. The south-west part of the island, and a considerable part of the interior, was inhabited by the Iverni, who gave name not only to the great river, but to the whole island, and who may perhaps be considered as the aboriginal inhabitants.

Ptolemy gives no points on the south-western part of the island, the coast of the Iverni; but he gives the bearings of two rivers on the south, the Dabrona, which seems to answer to Cork Harbour, (or to the Blackwater,) and the Birgus, the name and position of which coincide remarkably with those of the Barrow; and then he takes us to Carnsore Point, which was then called the Holy Promontory (*ἱερὸν ἄκρον*). Two tribes inhabited the neighbourhood of the rivers noted by Ptolemy on this side of the island, the Usdiæ or Vodiæ (according to the variations of the manuscripts), in the modern counties of Waterford and Tipperary, and the Brigantes, in Wexford.

* The words of the satirist are,—

Arma quidem ultra

*Litora Juvernæ promovimus, et modo captas
Orcadas, ac minima contentos nocte Britannos.—*

Juvenal, Sat. II. v. 159.

† The best commentary on Ptolemy's Geography of Ireland, is that by Konrad Mannert, *Geographie der Griechen und Römer; Britannia*, pp. 216, 229.

The eastern part of the island, separated from Britain by what Ptolemy calls the Ivernian ocean, contained more towns than either of the other three. The first place marked in proceeding north from the Holy Promontory, is the mouth of the river Modonus, supposed to be the Liffey; close to it was the town of Manapia, which is believed to be Dublin; then we are brought to the river Oboca, which is supposed to be the Boyne; and then to another town called Eblana, which, from Ptolemy's calculations, is supposed by Mannert to have stood at or near Dundalk, and not to have been (as we should have guessed from the name) Dublin.* The mouth of another river, the Bubinda or Buvinda, appears to correspond with Carlingford Bay; a cape called Isamnium answers to the modern Point St. John, forming the north-western extremity of Dundrum Bay; and between this and Cape Robogdium are marked two other rivers, the Vinderius, probably the small river which runs into Strangford Lough, and the Logia, the mouth of which seems to correspond with the bay of Carrickfergus. The tribes known to Ptolemy as inhabiting this coast, were (proceeding from the north) the Darini, immediately following the Robogdii, and occupying part of Antrim; the Voluntii, or, according to other texts, the Usluntii, occupying the county of Down; the Blanii or Eblani, who occupied the territory round the bay of Dundalk, and appear to have given name to their town, Eblana; the Cauci, on the banks of the Boyne; the Manapii, occupying the county of Dublin; and the Coriondi in Wicklow, between the Manapii and the Brigantes. The two names of tribes last mentioned prove that the south-east of Ireland had received its population from Britain.

Ptolemy has further given us the names and positions of seven towns in the interior of the island. The first of these he names Regia, which is probably a Latin name given to it as being the seat of one of the principal chiefs or reguli of Ireland; it was situated in the north, probably in the neighbourhood of Omagh. Rhæba seems to have stood in the vicinity of Inniskillen, on the banks of Lough Erne. Laberus was probably in the

county of Louth, not far from Ardee. Macolicum stood in the centre of the island, between Dublin and Galway, not far from Kilbeggan in Westmeath. Another Regia stood a little way inland from Killala Bay, but its exact position is uncertain. Dunum, the name of which is Celtic, and which was evidently a town of the Manapii, is believed to have stood some miles to the west of Dublin. Ivernus, or Iernis, the city of the great tribe of the Iverni, was probably not far from the modern Banagher, on the Shannon. From another part of Ptolemy's work, it would appear that Ivernus and Rhæba were the two most important towns in Ireland. The Latin name Regia occurring twice, proves that Ptolemy's information was not, as some writers have supposed, taken merely from older Phœnician authorities.

At what time the migration of the Manapii and Brigantes to Ireland took place---whether it preceded or followed the Roman invasion of Britain---we have now no means of deciding. There can be little doubt that the population of Ireland was at this time a mixture of races, and that new tribes were already overpowering the older lords of the soil. At some period, which is equally uncertain with the other early dates, but which appears to belong to the age of Roman rule in Britain, a race from the north, (probably Scandinavian,) the Scots, settled in the northern parts of Ireland, and soon made themselves so powerful, that Scots and Scotland were used for Irishman and Ireland. From the fourth century till the ninth or tenth, the Irish are almost always spoken of as Scots, and this use of the latter word has not unfrequently led more recent writers into serious mistakes. It is the generally received tradition, and we have no better authority to advance, that a colony of Irish Scots, about the beginning of the third century, established themselves in Caledonia, and formed a close alliance with the Picts, who appear to have been a kindred race, in their hostility against the Romanized Britons. In course of time, the name of Scots, lost in Ireland, was transferred to the whole population of North Britain.

Other northern people, among whom were the purer Teutonic race of the Saxons, who afterwards occupied so large a portion of Britain, joined in the attack to which the Roman province was exposed in the middle of the fourth century, until they were repressed by the energy of Theodosius, in the year 368. We are told by the Roman writer

* Eblana and the Oboca are believed by some antiquaries to be Dublin and the modern Avoca, but in this case it will be necessary to suppose that Ptolemy has made a confusion in his latitudes and longitudes, which is not easily explained. I have chiefly followed Mannert.

Ammianus Marcellinus, that the barbarians had overrun the whole of South Britain, and that Theodosius first encountered them under the walls of London. The Roman general, not content with expelling them from his province, followed them into their own fastnesses; and on this occasion at least, the Roman fleet, in pursuit of the fugitives, seems to have paid a hostile visit to the coast of Ireland.* Unfortunately, no detailed account of these events has been preserved. The history of Roman Britain becomes now more indistinct and confused, and we can only trace in the dim light thrown over it by meagre or very doubtful authorities, that the Irish Scots joined in the tumults and ravages which were at last put an end to by the final supremacy of the Anglo-Saxons.

Such is all we learn concerning Ireland from the Greek and Roman writers, previous to the fifth century; and it continued so little known to the rest of Europe, that Isidore of Seville, who wrote about the year 580, still takes his information from the older Roman geographers; he tells us that Ireland is smaller than Britain, but from its position, more fertile; that it was called Ibernica, because its southern shores looked to Spanish Iberia, and were washed by the waves of the Cantabrian ocean; and that it was also named Scotia, from the Scots, by whom it was then inhabited; and he adds, that the island contained no snakes or bees, and few birds, and that even dust or small stones brought thence and scattered among their cells drove the bees away from their honey.† This statement had been made long before by Solinus, and it was repeated with many additions and embellishments in later ages.

The monuments of the earlier inhabitants that remain, confirm in general the statement of the Roman historians, that they resembled the Britons in habits and manners. Their mode of burial seems to have been precisely the same, and this, combined with other circumstances, leads us to sup-

pose that the religious rites of the people of the two islands bore a very close resemblance. In Ireland as in Britain, the graves ---the only constructions of the aboriginal inhabitants which have remained entire--- consisted of a rough chamber or chambers of unhewn stones, covered with a lofty mound of earth or stones, the base of which was often surrounded with a circle of larger stones. In the central chamber or cist, the body was laid in full dress, accompanied with personal ornaments, weapons, or other articles, or if cremation had preceded the burial, the bones were placed in an urn, and similar articles were strewn on the floor. These monuments are of frequent occurrence in Ireland as well as in England, and they are often of enormous magnitude, as in the case of that at Newgrange, near Drogheda, in the county of Meath, and of two others in its immediate neighbourhood. It is far from improbable that Stonehenge, in England, was designed for an enormous sepulchral monument. In the numerous instances where the mound has, in the course of ages, been cleared away, and nothing but the central chamber and the external circle of stones is left standing, the former has received the name of a cromlech, and the latter that of a Druidical circle; and antiquaries who trusted more to their imagination than to a careful comparison of facts, thought they had been temples and altars.

In one respect, the contents of the sepulchres of the ancient Irish seem to contradict the Roman authorities, inasmuch as they apparently testify a higher degree of cultivation than in Britain. In most cases, the Irish urns are better made and much more richly ornamented than the British urns. The personal ornaments are more numerous and of greater intrinsic value, and articles of gold are far more abundant. Their forms and ornamentation are, however, similar in character; and we have other proofs that gold was found in Ireland in great abundance at a remote period. The immense quantity of gold found in the sepulchral mounds of the ancient Scythians, on the steppes of Russia, is no proof of the civilization of the people who were buried in them.

These various monuments of the arts among the early inhabitants of Ireland, are not found only in their graves, for they are dug up plentifully wherever land previously untouched is brought into cultivation, and they are obtained in great abundance from

* Claudian, who wrote a poetical panegyric on this war, says of the Roman commander, in one passage:—
Nec falso nomine Pictos

Edomuit, Scotumque vago mucrone secutus,
Fregit Hyperboreas remis audacibus undas.

And in another passage the same poet describes thus the result of the war:—

Maduerunt Saxone fuso
Arcades, incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule,
Scotorum cumulus flevit glacialis Ierne.

† Isidor. Hisp. Orig. lib. ix., c. 12.

the beds of rivers, and from those peculiar characteristics of Ireland, the bogs. The gold ornaments consist chiefly of the torques, or collars for the neck, which appear to have been peculiar to the Celtic tribes, with fibulæ, bracelets, rings for the fingers, crescents, bullæ, ornamented plates of gold of different forms, &c. Swords, spear-heads, knives, axes, tools of different kinds, with basins and other vessels, are generally of bronze. Many weapons and tools, especially those formed like axes and hammers, to which the old antiquaries gave the name of celts, are found rudely made of hard stone. Among the most curious, and by far the most numerous, of the articles of gold, are those in the form of rings, or rather of half rings, which the Irish antiquaries have decided to be ring-money, and which, indeed, there seems reason for believing served the purpose of money, for the Irish appear to have had no coinage till a very late period. This ring-money is of different sizes, which we are assured are regulated by an exact proportion of weight. That rings of this kind were used instead of money as a circulating medium among the earlier tribes of western and northern Europe, we know from several sources;* and we even find traces of it among the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, in which kings, renowned for their liberality, are described as "distributors of rings," and their treasurers are the "keepers of the hoards of rings." The bulk of the Irish ring-money is of pure gold, though rare instances occur of rings of silver and copper. The bronze swords, which are leaf-shaped, and resemble those figured on many Greek and Roman monuments, and the spear-heads, are precisely identical with those found not unfrequently in England; the Irish antiquaries suppose them to be Phœnician, but it is quite as probable that they are of Roman or Romano-British manufacture.

Very little has yet been done towards arranging and classifying the antiquities of Ireland, and deducing from them results calculated to throw a light upon its history. Till within a few years they were so utterly neglected, that the gold ornaments generally found their way direct to the melting-pots, and those of bronze or stone, when found, were either thrown away, or

kept by the superstitious peasantry as amulets. Several very valuable museums have now been formed, the finest of which is that of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. During the last few years, Irish antiquities have been collected with avidity; but even now the most important circumstances connected with them are too often neglected, and it is considered sufficient to know that they were found in Ireland, without making a memorial of the exact spot and circumstances of their discovery. This neglect has deprived the articles themselves of a great portion of their value to the historian. It is necessary not only to classify these antiquities as Irish, but, as it is certain that Ireland was inhabited by different races, we require to have them classified according to the different districts in which they are found, and then, by minute comparison, we should probably be able to distinguish the characteristics of the different tribes at which the writers of antiquity hint, and to trace those peculiarities to the cognate tribes in other parts. As far as can be ascertained at present, the stone implements and articles resembling those found in Scandinavia and Germany are chiefly met with in the north of Ireland, throughout the province of Ulster, which we have every reason to suppose was peopled by a northern race. The richer articles of gold, the ring-money, and the more ornamental relics, are found chiefly in the south and south-west, and belonged probably to the Iverni and their cognate tribes. The gold itself was chiefly procured from the mountains of Wicklow. The antiquities found in the western districts, bordering on the Irish Channel, are of a more miscellaneous character, partaking of the character of those of the north and south. It was there, probably, that the intermixture of tribes began first, and was most extensive.*

The vagueness of everything connected with early Irish antiquities, and the impenetrable mystery in which the subject seems to be involved, has given room for the genius of archæologists to build up a host of theories into which it is by no means the object of the present work to enter. We know

* Ring-money, closely resembling in form that of the ancient Irish, is actually made at the present day in Birmingham, for exportation to Africa, where it circulates among the natives.

* This general notion of the light thrown on the ethnography of ancient Ireland by the distribution of its antiquities, is founded chiefly on the information given me by Mr. Crofton Croker, who has formed a remarkably interesting private museum of Irish antiquities, and who has studied them with more care than any other antiquary with whom I am acquainted.

nothing, in fact, of the religion or polity of the ancient Irish, and can only suppose, from analogy, that they were the same, or nearly the same, as those of the Celtic tribes of western Europe, as we find them more or less imperfectly described by the writers of Greece and Rome. In the superstitions of the earlier ages of the world, the western extremities of the earth were looked upon with mystic reverence as possessing an especial degree of holiness, and as being the habitation of some of the sacred personages of the popular creed. To this feeling we owe the legends of the Hesperides, of the Atlantic Island of Plato, and a number of others of a similar description. This mysterious character of sanctity was of course carried further off, as geographical knowledge advanced, until at length Ireland, as the last distinctly known point, was regarded as the "sacred island," and then that character was moved still farther to some indefinite point which had no existence but in the popular imagination. This singular tendency of the popular belief continued to exist down to a late period, and we even find it influencing the minds of the contem-

poraries of Columbus, when he planned the discovery of the New World. Ireland is mentioned as "the sacred island" in the writers of antiquity, and its south-eastern foreland retained the name of the Sacred Promontory, as we have already seen from Ptolemy's geographical description, long after the Christian era. Whether there was any other reason for such an appellation than the common religious belief of nearly the whole pagan world, we cannot now determine; but there are certainly circumstances which might excite a suspicion that, in the migrations of tribes towards the west, Ireland may at last have become the principal seat of Celtic paganism. But this and other questions must be left for discussion to the antiquary, while we hasten forward to a period of more authentic history; previous to which, however, it is but right that we should glance rapidly over that long period of fabulous annals which occupies so large a place in the native Irish Chronicles, and which has exercised an influence so profound on the poetry and popular legends of the Irish people.

CHAPTER II.

LEGENDARY ACCOUNTS OF THE FIRST PEOPLING OF IRELAND.



FTER Christianity had been firmly established among the different nations of western and northern Europe, and they had become acquainted with the history and mythology of Greece and Rome, as well as with the scriptural annals of the first migrations of mankind, they soon began to combine these with their own fables, in the desire to trace their particular descent from the common stock. It is to this tendency that we owe the British legend of the wanderings of Brute, and the Franks and Germans and Northerners created for themselves similar stories. The Irish, more imaginative than the others, were not content with one simple line of descent, but they laid claim to a number of different branches springing

from the same parent stock, at different periods, and forming so many different and distinct colonies; and mounting higher into antiquity, they place the first of these colonies some weeks before the Deluge, when a niece of Noah, whom the legend calls Cesara, is said to have led a colony to the Irish shores. Others say that three daughters of Cain had been there before her, with their husbands and a colony of beautiful ladies. All these, however, were swept away by the flood, which left the island as lonely and desolate as it had been before their arrival.*

* It would be only throwing away time to examine critically fables like those contained in the present and following chapter, and which are here chiefly taken from Keating. They are important merely as they form the foundation of so much of Irish legend and poetry. The period at which they were invented extended probably from the tenth to the twelfth century. One of the great authorities for these legends is the celebrated Psalter of Cashel.

In this wild state it remained, according to the legend, three centuries, and then there came a colony from Migdonia in Greece, led by a chief named Partholan, of the family of Japhet, the ninth in descent from Noah. Partholan had been obliged to leave Greece on account of crimes into which his ambition had led him; he sailed by Sicily, and along the coast of Spain, and landing on a Wednesday, the fourteenth day of May, at Inber-Sceine on the coast of Kerry, he fixed his residence on an island in the river Erne, in the province of Ulster. The legend gives the names of some of Partholan's principal followers, among whom were four "learned men," three Druids, the same number of generals, and two merchants. One of his followers, named Breagha, introduced the custom of duelling; another, whose name was Beoir, "first promoted hospitality and good entertainment, and introduced the custom of feasting into the island;" and on the occasion of his first feast, a third, named Samaliliath, invented the use of cups for the convenience of drinking! Partholan, we are told, brought with him to Ireland his wife Dealnait, three sons with their three wives, and a thousand soldiers. The lady Dealnait, not long after their arrival, proved faithless to her husband, who discovered an amour between her and a low servant of his household named Togha. Partholan expostulated with his wife on her conduct; but she replied boldly and insolently, and the anger of the chief was roused beyond its usual limits. But it was not on the guilty lady or her paramour that he vented it; a favourite greyhound of Dealnait, called Samer, was standing by, and he seized it in his hand and dashed it to pieces against the ground. After this deed of blood, the dog was buried on the same spot in the island which Partholan had from the first chosen as his favourite residence, and which in memory of this event was ever afterwards known by the name of Inis-Samer. This, the Irish annalists tell us, was the "first case of jealousy in Ireland." The "first man who died in Ireland," was Feadha, the son of Tartan, seventeen years after the colony landed, and he was buried in a place called, from this circumstance, Magh-Feadha. Seven lakes burst forth in Ireland on the arrival of Partholan and his colony. He lived thirty years in Ireland, and after his death the island was divided between his four sons. His race lasted three hundred years, at the end of which period the whole population

was swept away by a fearful pestilence, the ravages of which were most severely felt at the Hill of Howth, or, as it was then called, Ben-Heder, the northern promontory of the bay of Dublin.

Ireland was thus again left wild and uninhabited, and it remained so till about the time of the patriarch Jacob, when another scion of the family of Japhet, named Nemeditus, the eleventh in descent from Noah, who, like Partholan, spoke the then universal language, Irish, left the shores of the Euxine sea with his four sons, and brought a new colony to people green Erin. The Nemeditians were engaged during more than one generation in harassing wars, with a powerful tribe of African sea-rovers, named Fomorians, who had established themselves in a strong-hold called the Tower of Conan, in an island on the coast of Ulster, named from it Tor-Inis, or the island of the Tower. At length the oppressed Nemeditians rose against their enemies, took the tower by storm, and levelled it with the ground. But new hosts of Fomorians came to the assistance of their fellows, and the unfortunate Nemeditians were reduced to a state little better than slavery. On one occasion, we are told, the whole forces of the two hostile peoples engaged in battle on the sea shore at low water, and after a savage combat, in which victory inclined to neither side and the slaughter was nearly equal, the tide gained upon them and surrounded them unperceived, and the few who escaped the sword and the spear, perished in the waves, with the exception of one individual who reached a boat in safety. A large party of the Nemeditians fled from their victorious foes, and escaped in ships to Greece, where, instead of meeting with a hospitable welcome, they were reduced to a worse slavery than that which they had left behind them.

The wars between the Nemeditians and the African pirates, and especially the storming of the Tower of Conan, were favourite subjects with the old Irish poets. It is not impossible that they may be founded on vague traditions of the early intercourse between the Phœnician traders and the inhabitants of Ierne.

When the Nemeditians of Ireland had long groaned under the tyranny of their conquerors, at length, after a period of two hundred and seventeen years from the first landing of Nemeditus, a party of the descendants of those of his race who had sought refuge in Greece, took again to the sea, and

came to the relief of their brethren. This third colony is called by the Irish chroniclers the Fir-Bolgs. Their leader, who was named Dela, divided the island among his five sons, who thus founded five kingdoms, and placed a stone in the centre of the island at the point where their five kingdoms met. These were the first "kings" who reigned in Ireland.

Scarcely forty years had elapsed from the establishment of these kingdoms, when another colony of the Nemedians of Greece, named by the chroniclers the Tuatha-de-Danaan, arrived on the Irish shores and deprived their predecessors of the sovereignty. The leader of this people was called Nuadh of the Silver-hand, from an artificial hand of silver substituted for one which he lost in battle subsequently to his arrival in Ireland. These Danaans, during their residence in Greece, had become extraordinary proficient in necromancy, and they carried their mysterious art to Norway and Denmark, where they first settled, and where they established several celebrated schools of magic. From Scandinavia they eventually sailed to Scotland, where they remained a few years, and then proceeded to Ireland. As they approached the shores of that island, they enveloped themselves in a mist by means of their incantations, under cover of which they landed secretly, and penetrated into the interior of the country as far as Sliabh-an-Iaruinn, or the Mountain of Iron, between the lakes of Allan and Erne, before the natives were aware of their presence. The latter made a speedy retreat into Connaught, closely followed by the invaders, who soon overtook them at Moytura, on the borders of Lake Masg. A decisive and sanguinary battle fought at this place, which was often celebrated by the minstrels of after ages under the title of the Battle of the Field of the Tower, ended in the complete discomfiture of the Fir-Bolgs, and rendered the Tuatha-de-Danaan sole masters of Ireland. The Fir-Bolgs fled to the Isle of Man, Arran, and the Hebrides.

The Tuatha-de-Danaan brought with them from Scandinavia, among other extraordinary things, three marvellous treasures, the Lia-Fail or Stone of Destiny, the Sorcerer's Spear, and the Magic Caldron, all celebrated in the old Irish romances. The Lia-Fail possessed the remarkable property of making a strange noise and becoming wonderfully disturbed, whenever a monarch of Ireland of pure blood was crowned, and a prophecy

was attached to it that whatever country possessed it should be ruled over by a king of Irish descent, and enjoy uninterrupted success and prosperity.* It was preserved at Cashel, where the kings of Munster were crowned upon it. According to some writers it was afterwards kept at the Hill of Tara, where it remained until it was carried to Scotland by an Irish prince, who succeeded to the crown of that country. There it was preserved at Scone, until Edward I. carried it away into England, and placed it under the seat of the coronation chair of our kings, where it still remains.

Nine kings of the Tuatha-de-Danaan are said to have ruled in succession, during a period of nearly two hundred years, and then they were overcome by the last and most famous of these fabulous colonies, that of the Milesians or Scots, the history of which forms one of the wildest and most romantic stories of the early Irish annals. It was from this race that the Irish kings and chieftains of modern times claimed descent.

The outline of the story of the Milesians is as follows: after the flood, we are told, the population of the world, assembled to raise the Tower of Babel, was separated into seventy-two peoples, speaking so many different languages. Of these, the Scythians, descended from Gomer, settled in the North. Gomer's grandson, Feniusa Farsa, or Phenius, king of the Scythians, was a prince who applied himself to the study of letters, and he was anxious to make himself acquainted with all the seventy-two languages. With this object he sent out seventy-two learned men to reside seven years among the seventy-two different people who spoke them; and on their return, he left his kingdom, having placed his son Nenuall on the throne as regent during his absence, and proceeded with these learned men to the plain of Shenaar, the scene of the dispersal, where this learned monarch founded a school or college of languages. To this Phenius the Irish annalists ascribe the invention of the Ogham characters, or ancient Irish alphabet, and they tell us that in his college on the plain of Shenaar was

* The properties of this celebrated stone were thus described in two Leonine verses,—

Ni fallat fatum, Scoti quocunque locatum

Invenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem.

It seems to be the opinion of some modern antiquaries that a pillar stone still remaining at the Hill of Tara is the true Lia-Fail, which in that case was not carried to Scotland.

cultivated the purest dialect of the Irish language, called the Bearla Feini.

While Phenius presided over his schools at Shenaar, his second son Niul was born, who was, as he grew up, instructed in all the languages of the world, and then Phenius returned to his kingdom and established schools there, over which he placed as president Gadel the son of Eathur. Phenius commanded this scholar to digest the Irish language into form and regulation, and to divide it into five several dialects: the first was the Finian dialect, spoken by the militia and soldiery; the second, the poetical; the third, the historical; the fourth, the dialect of the physicians; and the fifth, the common idiom, or vulgar Irish used in general by the people, which, after the name of Gadel the president, was named "gaoidhealg."

On the death of Phenius, his elder son succeeded to the throne, and Niul was left with no other riches than his learning, the fame of which however had reached the ears of the king of Egypt, who induced him to go thither to instruct the Egyptians, and who was so well satisfied with him that he gave him his daughter Scota to wife. Their son was called Gadel, or Gadelas, in memory of his father's friend, the president of the Scythian schools. After one or two generations, the descendants of Niul, having provoked the jealousy of the Egyptian monarch, were expelled, and took refuge in Crete, from whence, after a while, they again put to sea (for they had become great mariners) and returned to their ancient home in Scythia. They were however received by their kindred in a hostile manner, and after struggling seven years they took to their ships again, resolved to seek a home in some other land. After wandering about, in peril from storms and from hostile tribes, and uncertain whither ultimately to bend their course, they consulted their principal Druid, named Caicar, and he by his prophetic knowledge informed them, that there was no country ordained for them to inhabit, until they arrived on the coast of a certain island in the extreme west, but that they themselves would never set foot in that country, although it would be enjoyed by their posterity.

The Gadelians, as this people were now called from Gadelas the son of Niul, proceeded to a country which the Irish annals name Gothland, or the country of the Goths, where they settled temporarily, and remained, according to some versions of the

legend, a hundred and fifty, according to others, three hundred years. They then proceeded to Spain, where, after long and sanguinary wars with the aboriginal inhabitants, the Gadelians attained to great power and influence. One of the most distinguished princes in the direct line from Niul was Breogan, who defeated the Spaniards in many battles, and built a city named after him Brigantia, and afterwards known by the name of Braganza. His grandson, named Milesius, collected his kinsmen and people and returned to Scythia, where by his great merits he became prime minister of the king. His popularity in the sequel excited the king's jealousy, and he only escaped death by invading the palace with his faithful Gadelians, and slaughtering the king, and then, disgusted with the ingratitude of the Scythians, they retired to their fleet, and proceeded direct to the shores of Egypt, where Milesius soon gained so far on the affections of the Pharaoh, that he gave him his daughter in marriage, who, like the wife of Niul, bore the name of Scota. After remaining seven years in Egypt, Milesius on a sudden called to mind the old prophecy of the Druid Caicar, and he again put to sea with his people, made direct for the West, entered the Atlantic Ocean, and after wandering we hardly understand where, landed at length in northern Spain, on the coast of the Bay of Biscay.

Spain, we are told, was at this time infested by the Goths, whom Milesius and his followers defeated in many battles, and thus became masters of nearly all the peninsula. At length a famine in the land, and the harassing life they led, continually exposed to the attacks of enemies, led them to think of seeking their fortunes elsewhere, and the principal persons of the family of Milesius met in council, and they chose Ith the son of Breogan, a prince of great valour and discretion, to lead an expedition in search of the western island promised them in the ancient prophecy. Some say that Ith, before he started, went up to his observatory at the top of the highest tower of Brigantia, and thence, one starry winter's night before he set sail, obtained his first glimpse of Ireland through a powerful telescope! Ith and his party landed on the northern coast of the island, and were rather astonished to find that the natives—who were the Tuathade-Danaan—talked Irish like themselves. They learnt from them that three kings then governed the island, that they were at that

moment met together at a place called Oileach Neid on the confines of the province of Ulster, and that they were engaged in a quarrel about a number of jewels that were left them by their ancestors, which would in all probability be decided only by the sword. Ith marched with a hundred of his men to the spot, where he was well received by the three kings, who referred their dispute to his decision, and he succeeded in restoring confidence between them. But the three princes were no sooner reconciled than they became jealous of the strangers, and fearing that, allured by the richness of the country, they would be tempted to return with a force sufficient to conquer it, they determined to cut them off in their retreat. The result was a desperate battle, in which the Milesians were overpowered by numbers, and Ith was mortally wounded, but they succeeded in carrying their chief on ship-board, though he expired before they reached the coast of Spain. Milesius had died during their absence, but the princes of his family, enraged at the sight of the body of the slaughtered chieftain, determined to go to Ireland and revenge his death.

The Milesians accordingly sailed with thirty ships, and made their first attempt to land at Inber-Slainge on the northern coast of Leinster, now Wexford Harbour. Here they were defeated by the incantations of the Tuatha-de-Danaan, who by their diabolical arts threw a cloud over the whole island, which so confused the invaders, that they thought they saw nothing but the resemblance of a hog. They then left this spot to seek a more favourable coast, and proceeded to the coast of Munster, where they effected a landing at Inber-Sceine, now Bantry-Bay. The Irish chronologists have ascertained that this event happened on Thursday, the first day of May, in the year of the world 2934. Marching into the country, they encountered successively the three wives of the Irish chieftains, with troops of beautiful ladies and Druids, and at length they arrived at the royal palace of Teamair, where it was arranged that the Milesians should first return to their ships, on the agreement that if they could force a landing in despite of the older inhabitants, the latter should, without further opposition, surrender to them the sovereignty of the island. The Tuatha-de-Danaan indeed depended more for protection on their enchantments than on their valour, and no sooner were the Milesians on board than

they conjured up a tempest that nearly destroyed the whole fleet. After much loss and damage, the remains of the naval armament was again assembled, and made good a landing in the old harbour of Inber-Sceine. They marched thence to the mountain of Sliabh-Mis, where was fought the great and decisive battle, so often celebrated by the bards of later times, which secured to the Milesians the conquest of Ireland. Among the slain were several of the Milesian as well as of the native princesses, with many of their beautiful ladies, who seem to have taken a very unfeminine part in these actions; the spot where each fell was in later times pointed out by the memorial stones, grey with age, which were said to stand over them. Another action followed, in which the Milesians were again victorious, and the three princes of the island were slain. The conquerors now seized upon the country, which was divided between the two leaders of the expedition, Heber and Heremon, the latter taking the northern portion of the island, and the other the south. The only dispute between the two princes in the division of their people, is said to have arisen from a very skilful musician named O-Naoi, and an eminent poet named Cir-Mac-Cis, who had accompanied the expedition from Spain, and whom each of the chieftains desired to possess in his kingdom. At length it was determined to decide the question by lots, and in the end the musician fell to the share of Heber, and the poet to Heremon. The old Irish antiquaries tell us that, from this circumstance, the southern part of the island, over which Heber ruled, has ever since been more celebrated for its musicians than the north.

For a year there was peace between the two brothers, and then strife was stirred up by the jealousy of a woman. The three most fruitful valleys in Ireland were Druim Clasach, Druim Beathach, and Druim Finghin. Two of these belonged to Heber. His wife was a princess of great pride and ambition, and she envied the queen of Heremon the possession of the other fruitful valley. After repeatedly urging her husband to lay claim to it, and obtain it by force of arms, she at length declared positively that she would never sleep in his bed again until he had made her queen of the three fruitful valleys of Ireland. Heber, thus instigated, took up arms against his brother, and was defeated and slain in a great battle in the plain of Geisiol, in Leinster. In conse-

quence of this event, Heremon became sole monarch of Ireland.

Heremon was followed, after his death, by a long succession of princes, whose histories are as fabulous as his own, and who are not deserving of a detailed notice. In the reign of Tighermas, the sixth in succession from him, we are told that the first gold-mine was discovered near Liffey; and we learn from Keating that "in his time likewise the colours of blue and green were invented, and the people began to be more polite in their habits, and set off their dress with various ornaments." This prince, it is added, established a law throughout his dominions, that the quality of every person should be known by his garb; the dress of a slave was to be of one colour; that of a soldier of two; a commanding officer was permitted to wear three colours; the garb of a gentleman who kept hospitable tables for the entertainment of strangers, was to be of four colours; five colours distinguished the nobility; the king, queen, and other members of the royal family, were confined to six; and historians and persons of eminent learning were permitted to wear the same number of colours as the king.

Ollamh Fodhla, (Fodhla the sage) who lived, according to the poets, somewhat less than two hundred years after the king last mentioned, but who is placed by those historians who believe in his existence at a much shorter distance before the Christian era, was the Alfred of early Irish history. One of the most important acts said to have shed lustre on the reign of this monarch, was the establishment of the great triennial parliament or convention at Tara, at which the leading persons of the three orders of society, the monarch, the druids, and the people, were called together for the purpose of deliberating on public affairs, and passing laws. At these meetings, also, we are told that the historical records of the kingdom were revised, carefully examined, and corrected, and the result entered in the great national register called the Psalter of Tara, which is supposed to have been destroyed at the period of the Norman invasion. The native historians of Ireland refer back in triumph to this book, as containing the authentic records of Irish history from a period more remote by many centuries than the Christian era, and it is supposed that part of the contents of the Psalter of Cashel, which contains much of the fabulous history of the Irish, was copied from it. It

was, perhaps, a mere collection of bardic poems. The great legislator, Ollamh Fodhla, is said also to have established the usage which made employments and offices hereditary in families. The most important offices thus transmitted, were those of heralds, physicians, bards, and musicians, to each of which professions he assigned lands for their use; and he instituted a great school at Tara, which became afterwards celebrated under the name of Mur-ollamham, or the college of the learned. The parliament of Tara was called in Irish the Feis-teamhrach, or general assembly.

Between thirty and forty princes are now enumerated in the Irish annals as possessing the throne in succession, though they obtained it too often by usurpation and acts of violence. In fact, no very distinct law of succession appears to have been observed. It is told of one of these princes, named Lughaidh Laighe, who had slain his two predecessors on the throne, that a certain druid, who had the gift of prophecy, foretold to his father, Daire Domhtheach, that he would have a son, whose name should be Lughaidh, and who should one day wear the crown of all Ireland. Subsequently to this, Daire had in succession five sons, and that he might not miss of the fulfilment of the prediction, he gave each of them the same name of Lughaidh. When the five brothers had grown to maturity, their father went to the druid and inquired which of his five sons was destined to be monarch of the island. The druid, instead of giving him a direct answer, told him to take them on the morrow to Tailtean, where there was to be a general convention of the chief people of the kingdom, and informed him that, while the assembly was sitting, he would see a fawn running through the field, which would be pursued by the whole company. Daire's five sons, the druid said, would join in the pursuit, and one of them would overtake and kill the fawn; he it was who would reign over the whole island. Daire followed punctually the directions of the druid, and when he came next day with his sons to Tailtean, he found the assembly sitting, and almost at the same moment he saw the fawn running over the field. The whole assembly broke up in the midst of their debates to pursue the fugitive, and were of course joined by the five brothers. The chase was long and wearisome; but just as they reached Binneadair, afterwards called the Hill of Howth, a mist, raised by enchantment, threw

them off from the pursuit, with the exception of Daire's five sons, who continued to hunt the fawn as far as Dail Maschorb, in Leinster, where one of them overtook and killed it. He henceforth received the name of Lughaidh Laighe, the latter word being the Irish for a fawn. After a reign of seven years, this prince was also slain by an usurper.

On his death, three princes of the province of Ulster for a long time strove for the crown; their names were Aodh-Ruadh, Diathorba, and Kimboath. At length it was agreed between them that each should take the crown in succession during twenty-one years. Aodh-Ruadh reigned first, and at the end of his period was drowned at a place called Easruadh, leaving an only daughter named Macha Mongruadh, or the princess with the red hair. Diathorba then reigned his twenty years, and Kimboath followed. When his time for resigning the crown arrived, it became a question who should succeed, for Diathorba, who had five sons, protested against a woman being the ruler over men, and encouraged his sons to enforce their claims against Aodh-Ruadh's daughter, by an appeal to arms. But Macha was a high-spirited princess; most of the Irish chiefs took her part, and she raised an army and entirely defeated her competitors, a misfortune which Diathorba took so much to heart that he soon afterwards died of grief. His five sons, however, so far from being discouraged, raised another army, and again met the princess in the field; but they were defeated more signally than before, and were so closely pursued, that they were obliged to conceal themselves in the woods and marshes of the country. Having now assured to herself the throne, queen Macha married Kimboath. Soon after her marriage she received private information that the five brothers were concealed in the wood of Buirrim, and she determined to go herself and effect their capture, previous to which

she stained her hair, and took the dress of a peasant girl. After searching the wood for some time, she found the five pretenders boiling part of a wild boar which they had killed. They were surprised at the sight of a woman in so solitary a place, but they politely invited her to sit down and partake of the modest meal to which they told her their desperate circumstances had reduced them. In the sequel the brothers became enamoured of their guest, and a scene followed over which we may throw a veil, merely to state that the disguised queen succeeded in binding fast with cords all the five brothers, who in that condition were carried away prisoners to the court. The council of the kingdom, heartily tired of the civil war which had divided it, condemned them all to death; but the queen remitted the sentence, decreeing that as a punishment they should be compelled to erect a stately palace in the province of Ulster, in which the princes of her race should in future keep their court. Macha, we are told, drew the plan of this palace with a pin or bodkin she wore in her neck, which served to bind her hair; and hence it was called Eamhain-Macha, which in Irish signified the pin of the neck of Macha. This celebrated edifice is better known to the general reader as the palace of Emania.

Other stories are told relating to the building of this palace, which many historians ascribe to king Kimboath. It became so celebrated in Irish history, that not only were the Irish princes of Ulster henceforth universally called kings of Emania, but the date of its erection became a technical one in the Irish annals. Tigernach, one of the most esteemed of the early Irish chroniclers, has assumed this event as the dawn of authentic history. Near it stood the no less celebrated mansion of the Knights of the Red Branch, whose praise was the subject of many a lay of the Irish bards.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND PERIOD OF IRISH MYTHIC HISTORY; FROM THE BUILDING OF THE PALACE OF EMANIA TO THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.



IN spite, however, of the opinion of Tigernach, the best that we can say of the period of the Irish annals on which we now enter is, that it may possibly contain some dim shadow of real historical events. It is embellished with the same deeds of violence, adventures of knight-errantry, and stories of illicit love, which have distinguished the previous history, and mark its relationship to romance. Up to this time Ireland is represented as having been divided into a sort of pentarchy, under five different kings, one of whom was generally by mutual agreement, or by force of arms, accepted as superior lord over the other four. We have seen in the latter part of the previous history, that this superiority then rested with the kings of Ulster. The second in succession from Kimboath, according to the Irish annals, was a direct descendant of Heremon, and was named Ugaine or Hugony the Great. He, like so many of these Irish kings, obtained the crown by the murder of his predecessor, but he showed himself by his wisdom worthy of the throne, and he soon became celebrated for the prudence of his government and the extent of his power. His influence with the parliament or convention of Tara enabled him to abolish the pentarchy, and he induced the four provincial kings not only to surrender their right of succession in favour of his family, but he made them promise, by a solemn oath, not to accept a supreme monarch from any other line. In their place he established a division of the kingdom into twenty-five districts, under so many viceroys, and thus entirely broke down the power of the four subordinate, and often independent, states. The annalists inform us that this division was occasioned by the troubles excited by his own family. Ugaine had, they tell us, twenty-five children, twenty-two of whom were sons, and the latter no sooner reached manhood, than each collected a company of

soldiers, and began to oppress and plunder their father's subjects. To pacify his children, and relieve his subjects, the monarch, by the advice of his supreme council, divided his kingdom into twenty-five districts, over each of which he gave one of them the command. Ugaine was slain, after a long reign, by a man to whom Keating gives the very unharmonious looking name of Badhbhchadh, who, however, did not, like most of the early Irish regicides, succeed to the throne, but was slain by Ugaine's son, who after a short reign was murdered by his brother, and he also was eventually slain by another usurper. This last murderer, who was named Labhradh Loingseach, is the subject of several singular legends, one of which is a mere adaptation of the classic fable of Midas.

The pages of the annalist now become more barren than usual, and we have a long series of names of monarchs, of whom we are told little more than that they reigned, and were in their turns put to death. One of these regicide usurpers, named Eochaidh Feidhlioch,* who is said to have reigned not long before the Christian era, destroyed the monarchy which Ugaine had established, by again dividing Ireland into a small number of separate states. He built himself a splendid palace† in the province of Connaught, which received, after his death, the name of Rath-Cruachan. His daughter Meibh, who was twice married, reigned in Connaught after him, in whose time arose the enmity between the inhabitants of that province and those of Ulster, which has never been entirely appeased. The follow-

* The name is said to mean Eochaidh of the long sigh, and to have been given him because he laboured under so melancholy a dejection of spirits, that he was continually drawing out sighs of very immoderate length. Keating tells us, "He contracted this sadness of mind upon the loss of three of his sons, who were princes of very promising hopes, but were unfortunately slain in the battle of Dromchriadh, and this habit of sighing that was upon him followed him to his grave."

† The splendid palaces of the ancient Irish seem to have been, as far as we can gather, only wooden edifices surrounded by a dyke of earth.

ing story is told as the origin of this first war, which lasted seven years, and formed one of the favourite themes of the Irish minstrels.

The king of Ulster at this time was Conary (or Connor) the Great, a monarch who enjoyed a high reputation for his wisdom. One day he went, accompanied as usual by an eminent druid, his chief councillor, to a splendid entertainment given by his minister Feidhlim, and during the feast Feidhlim's wife unexpectedly fell in labour, and was delivered of a daughter. The druid was immediately requested to exercise his prophetic skill in foretelling the future fortunes of the child, and he said that when grown to womanhood, she would be the cause of much trouble and confusion in the kingdom. The great chieftains who were present were of opinion that the public interest required that the child should be put to death; but Conary interposed, declaring that he would take the young lady under his own charge, that she should be educated with care under his own eye, and that perhaps, when she arrived at a marriagable age, he might further disappoint the prophecy by making her his wife. The druid protested against the belief that any foresight of the king or his councillors could prevent the fulfilment of the child's destiny, and he gave it the name of Deirdre.

Conary accordingly carried the child away with him, and placed her under the care of a great poetess named Leabharcham, in the highest tower of one of his strongest castles, where a body of troops kept constant watch over her safety. Thus was Deirdre held in close confinement under the eyes of her duenna, till she grew up and became not only one of the most beautiful, but also, by the lessons of Leabharcham, one of the most accomplished women in Ireland. It happened on a time, as Deirdre and Leabharcham were looking out from a window of their tower, they saw one of the slaughtermen of the garrison killing a calf for the use of her table on a snowy day, and some of the blood fell upon the snow, and a raven came and fed upon it. The young lady was, it appears, of an amorous and romantic disposition, and this sight threw her into a sudden and strange emotion; for, turning to her duenna, she exclaimed, "Would that I were so happy as to be in the arms of a man who was of the three colours I now see, his skin as white as the driven snow, his hair glossy black like the feathers of the

raven, and his cheeks ruddy as the calf's blood!" The duenna, who had become much attached to her young mistress, and was taken by surprise with her uncommon wish, told her somewhat indiscreetly that there was a youth belonging to the court who exactly answered to this description, and that his name was Naois, the son of Visneach. For this man Deirdre conceived a violent passion, and she never rested till Naois had with great difficulty been introduced into the tower. There, after such a scene as generally occurs on similar occasions, it was agreed that the lover should attempt to deliver her from her confinement.

Naois communicated his design to his two brothers, who joined him in the enterprize, and having secretly assembled a body of a hundred and fifty armed men, they attacked the castle by surprise, overcame the guards, and carried the damsel away. They fled with their prize to the sea coast, found a ship at hand, and reached Scotland in safety, where they were hospitably received by the Scottish king. But when the latter heard of the beauty of Deirdre, he resolved to obtain possession of her by stratagem or by force, and after some hostilities between the Scots and the Irish, who had been put on their guard by private information of the king's designs, Naois was obliged to fly for refuge with his wife and companions to a small island in the sea. In this distress he had opened communications with his friends in Ireland, and, by their intercessions, the king was at last prevailed upon to pardon him the rape of the lady, and give him permission to return to Ulster in safety, and as a testimony of his good faith, he placed as hostages in the hands of the friends of Naois two persons of distinction, Feargus, the son of Roig, and Cormac Conloingios. Feargus sent his own son to the assistance of Naois, and having, with his aid, escaped from Scotland, they all landed on the coast of Ulster.

But the king's anger had never been appeased, although he pretended to listen to his councillors, and when he heard that the three sons of Visneach were on Irish ground, he sent one of his most faithful officers, named Eogan, with a strong body of troops, ostensibly to congratulate the exiles on their arrival, but with secret orders to fall upon them suddenly and slay them, and to bring away the lady Deirdre. These orders were so strictly fulfilled, that not only the three brothers and most of their followers were slain, but the son of Feargus was also killed

in an attempt to resist the treachery of Eogan, and the lady was safely lodged in the palace of king Conary.

The latter had thus delivered himself from the three troublesome sons of Visneach, but, in the execution of his treacherous design, he had provoked two new enemies, in the hostages he had given for their safety, Feargus and Cormac Conloingios. The former, who had lost his son in the skirmish, set no bounds to his anger, but, joining with other dissatisfied chiefs, he raised an army, and marched to the royal residence of Emania. Here Conary was defeated in an obstinate battle, and compelled to fly, leaving one of his sons and a great number of his friends dead on the field, and the victors plundered the palace of Emania, putting all its inmates to the sword, "not sparing," to use the words of Keating, "the ladies of the seraglio, whom the king kept for his own pleasure." Conary carried away with him the lady Deirdre, whom, finding she would receive no consolation, in a fit of revenge he gave to Eogan, the murderer of her husband, "to be used at his pleasure;" but, as he was carrying her home, she leaped out of his chariot and broke her neck.

The other hostage, Cormac, collected together his friends and adherents, and retired into Connaught, where he persuaded queen Meibh to give him protection, and join with him in making inroads into Ulster. Feargus, when he found himself unable to make head against the increasing forces of his sovereign, followed Cormac, and gained so much on the affections of Meibh, that she not only made him chief commander of her armies, but she secretly bore to him three sons at one birth, from whom some of the most distinguished families in Ireland claimed their descent. The queen and her general invaded Ulster with a powerful army, and, although they were bravely opposed by the knights of the Red Branch, a military order which enjoyed much celebrity in Irish romance, they plundered the district of Cuailgne in the county of Louth, and returned home with an immense booty of cattle. This plundering expedition is considered by the Irish annalists as the commencement of the famous seven years' war just alluded to, which is from this circumstance commonly spoken of as the war of Tain-bo-Cuailgne, or spoils of the cattle at Cuailgne. Before it was appeased, king Conary, his slayer Ceat, queen Meibh, her paramour Feargus, as well as Cuchullin,

Conal Cearnach, and other heroes of the Red Branch, were murdered or slain in the field. These events have a peculiar interest, from the circumstance that some fragments of the Irish romantic lays commemorating them are supposed to have contributed chiefly in suggesting to Macpherson the forgery of the poems of Ossian. The Irish annalists place the death of Cuchullin in the second year of the Christian era.

The first century after the birth of Christ contains another long list of Irish kings, few of whom have obtained any celebrity in the Irish annals; but it is represented as a period convulsed by social revolutions, in which the best of the old Milesian blood perished. The first of these civil convulsions arose from the usurpations of the literary or bardic order, which, having been surrounded by a multitude of privileges and immunities, had become so powerful and overbearing, that the liberties of the people were threatened by its encroachments. A popular reaction was the consequence, and the whole order was on the point of being suppressed. But at this moment Conquovar, king of Ulster, came forward in its support, and by his influence an arrangement was made, by which the bardic order was subjected to extensive reforms, and their civil power was limited. This monarch caused a digest of the ancient laws to be compiled, which received the name of the Breathe Neimidh, or Celestial Judgments. King Criomthan, or, according to others, his successor Fiachadh, was contemporary with Agricola, the Roman commander in Britain; but the Irish writers, instead of placing their countrymen in any danger from an invasion by the Romans, make them send expeditions to Scotland to encourage and assist the Caledonians in invading the Roman province, whence they returned to Ireland laden with spoils. The death of the monarch who led this expedition was followed almost immediately by the great plebeian insurrection.

It appears from the very doubtful authorities with which we have now to deal, that the Fir-Bolgs, who formed a large portion of the population of Ireland, especially in Connaught, had been held in a state of great oppression by their Milesian conquerors, and different circumstances at this moment urged them to a revolt. Their design was favoured by some discontented chiefs, and a great public meeting held at Magh-cru, in Connaught, was fixed upon as the oppor-

tunity for the outbreak. Three kings were present at the feast, Fiachadh, the supreme monarch of Ireland, Feidh, king of Munster, and Breasal, king of Ulster, each with his queen, and with all the chief nobility of his kingdom. On the ninth day of the festival, at a preconcerted signal from their leaders, the plebeians, as they are called, arose in arms, and made an indiscriminate massacre of the defenceless guests, from which the three queens alone were allowed to escape. The success of this conspiracy led to a general insurrection throughout the kingdom, the Milesian monarchy was overthrown, and the leader of the rebels, named Cairbre Cinncait, or the cat-eared, from a peculiar conformation of his ears, was placed on the throne. The reign of this usurper lasted seven years, during which Ireland, abandoned to the rule of the rabble, was reduced to a state of the greatest distress, and the fulness of its misery was completed by a general famine, in which, according to the words of the annalists, there were throughout the kingdom "no grain on the stalk, no fruitfulness in the waters, the herds all barren, and but one acorn on the oak." The severity of their sufferings made people yearn after their old race of monarchs. The usurpation of Cairbre Cinncait is placed about the year 90 of our era.

The three queens who had escaped from the massacre of Magh-cru were all pregnant; they had taken refuge in Scotland, where each had given birth to a son. The names of the infant princes were Tuathal, Tio-bruide, and Corbullan.

The usurper Cairbre died after a reign of seven years, when his son Moran, instead of accepting the crown, bowed to the wishes of the people, and the royal race was restored in the person of Feredach, the son of Criomthan. The new reign was one of justice and prosperity, and the Milesian monarch seemed to have secured to himself the heart of his subjects. He bestowed the place of chief judge of the kingdom on Moran, who became celebrated for his righteous judgments, and whose name was given to a famous collar, which he first wore, named in Irish Iodhain Moran, or Moran's collar, which was said to give warning, by pressing against the neck of the wearer, whenever the sentence he was about to pronounce was unjust.* This monarch,

* It may be mentioned, as an instance of the rashness of the old Irish antiquaries, that when a golden collar or breastplate was found in a turf-bog in the

county of Limerick, Vallancy immediately pronounced it to be the Iodhain-Moran, or collar of justice!

from the wisdom with which he reigned, received the title of Feredach the Just; on his death, he was succeeded by his son Fiach. During their reigns the exiled queens appear to have returned with their children to Ireland. The justice of Feredach was probably shown only towards that portion of his subjects who boasted of Milesian blood. The plebeians suffered naturally enough under the vengeance of their conquerors; they were goaded into a new revolt under the reign of Fiach, and on this occasion the provincial kings took advantage of the insurrection to make war upon their superior monarch. The consequence was that, after a violent struggle, Elim king of Ulster wrested the crown of Ireland from its rightful owner, and young Tuathal, who was looked upon as the next heir, was carried back to Scotland, where he received protection from the king of the Picts, his maternal grandfather.* Elim again raised the plebeians above the Milesians, but in a short time they became weary of their own excesses, and anarchy and famine gave strength to the friends of the deposed dynasty. Encouraged by their representations, Tuathal returned to Ireland with a small army raised in Scotland, and landed at Jorrus Domhrionn, where he was joined by his Irish adherents, who had already risen in arms, and were plundering the possessions of their enemies. The young prince lost no time in marching to Tara, where he found the principal men of the Milesian race assembled to welcome him, and he was proclaimed king under the title of Tuathal the Acceptable. This new revolution is fixed by the annalists in A.D. 130. The usurper Elim made an attempt to regain his power, but he was defeated and killed in the battle of Aichle. The strength of the plebeians, however, was still so great, that it required a long struggle to reduce them to obedience, and the old Irish historians tell us that Tuathal defeated them in twenty-five successive battles in Leinster, twenty-five in Connaught, and the same number in Munster.†

The reign of Tuathal was distinguished by vigour and consequent prosperity, and it makes a considerable figure in the Irish annals. He convoked, as soon as possible

county of Limerick, Vallancy immediately pronounced it to be the Iodhain-Moran, or collar of justice!

* Some of the annalists make Tuathal's mother the wife of Feredach the Just, and not of Fiachadh.

† Moore observes in his note on these events, that

after his accession, the general assembly of the States at Tara, and he made them take their ancient and solemn oath that as long as Ireland should be encircled by the sea, they would acknowledge no one but of his line as their lawful monarch. Tuathal also took various measures to increase the power of the crown, and add to its possessions. With this view he separated a tract of land from each of the four provinces at the point where they meet, and adding them to a piece of land already possessed by his predecessors, he formed the whole into the county of Meath, which he appropriated as an appendage to the royal domain, under the title of "the mensal lands of the monarch of Ireland." In the four districts thus joined to Meath stood the four grand seats of the Irish monarch: on the tract taken from Munster he built the magnificent palace of Tlactha, where on the night answering to the eve of All Saints, a great assembly was held, to light fires and perform other ceremonies in honour of the idol named Samhin. He built another royal palace in the portion taken from the province of Connaught, at the sacred hill of Usneath, where a second assembly was held on the day of the baal-fire (the first day of May). The third palace erected by this king stood in the district taken from Ulster, on the plains of Tailtean, where was held the celebrated fair and games in honour of Tailte, the last queen of the Fir-Bolgs, who was buried there: it was celebrated on the first of August. The district taken from Leinster contained the palace of Tara or Teamhair, already mentioned more than once as the scene of the triennial parliament of the ancient sovereignty. The grand assemblies held annually at these places by Tuathal were accompanied with great splendour and magnificence.

Among many measures of national improvement ascribed to this monarch, the province of Leinster alone was struck with his vengeance. We learn from the Irish accounts that the prince of Leinster, named Eochaidh Ainchean, stood so high in the favour of Tuathal, that he received in marriage his eldest daughter, the princess Dairina, a lady

"the plebeians engaged in this rebellion are in general called *attacots*, a name corrupted from the compound Irish term *attach-tuatha*, which signifies, according to Dr. O'Connor, the giant race (Prol. i. 74); but, according to Mr. O'Reilly's version, simply the plebeians." We can hardly help suspecting that the word was invented to make an identity with the wild *Attacots* of the Roman writers.

of great beauty, whom he carried homewith him to his residence. The prince of Leinster seems to have been struck as much with the charms of another sister named Fithir, as with those of the lady he married; and, after the space of about a year, he returned to the court of Tara, told king Tuathal that his daughter Dairina was dead, and declared that the only means of appeasing his grief for the loss of his wife was to allow him to marry the princess Fithir. The king, thinking to strengthen his alliance with Leinster, and thus secure the peace of Ireland, granted his request, and the marriage was celebrated with due pomp. But on arriving at Leinster, the young princess to her astonishment found her elder sister still living, and so great was her surprise and shame, that she almost instantly dropt down dead. Dairina had come to receive her sister as a visitor, entirely unconscious of what had taken place, and she was so affected at her death and at the circumstances which had occasioned it, that she struggled but a short time with a broken heart, and then followed her to the grave. King Tuathal, in his anger at the base conduct of his son-in-law, laid a heavy tribute on the men of Leinster, who were compelled to pay every second year six thousand of the fairest cows, and the same number of ounces of pure silver, of rich mantles, of fat hogs, of large sheep, and of strong polished caldrons. This disgraceful tax continued to be levied on the men of Leinster during about five hundred years, and was the cause of much bloodshed and confusion, until, in 693, it was remitted through the intercession of St. Moling.

Three kings now reigned and slew each other in succession, and then came Feidhlim the Legislator, whose accession is placed about the year 164, and under whom the laws of the kingdom were again revised and reformed. He was one of the few Irish kings who was permitted to die in peace. His son was the famous Con of the Hundred Battles, whose deeds furnished so many themes for the Irish bards, and who succeeded to the crown after a short interval which followed the death of his father.

As his name would lead us to suppose, Con was engaged in continual hostilities with the subordinate princes of the island. His most celebrated war was that against Mogha-Nuad, king of Leinster, who defeated Con in ten sanguinary battles, and compelled him to give up to him one-half of the kingdom of Ireland, a division which

is said to have existed in reality but one year. But in common talk the division was remembered to a very late period, the northern part of Ireland being spoken of as Leath-Cuinn, or Con's half, and the southern as Leath-Mogha, or Mogha's half. In the sequel Mogha-Nuad was treacherously slain by his rival Con, who also fell by the hands of assassins after a reign of twenty years. He was alone without guards in his palace of Tara, when fifty men hired by Tiobraid Tíreach, king of Ulster, entering in the disguise of women, fell upon the hero of so many battles, and put him to death.

Con was succeeded on the throne by his son-in-law, Conary; whose son Cairbre Riada retired into Scotland and established the Irish settlement in Argyleshire, which was named from its founder Dalriada, and grew up into a kingdom which, after the destruction of the Picts by Kenneth Mac Alpine, gave the reigning family to Scotland. Conary's successor was the only surviving son of the warlike Con, named Art Aonfhír, or Art the Melancholy. Art's son by a concubine, Cormac Ulfadha, or Cormac the Hairly, obtained the throne of his father, according to the Irish chronology, in A. D. 254, after a short period of civil commotions, during which it fell into the power of more than one usurper. Romantic incidents attended the marriage as well as the birth of Cormac. There lived, we are told, an eminent and wealthy tradesman in the province of Leinster, named Buiciodh Brughach. This man was so remarkable for his hospitality, that he made it his practice to keep a large caldron always boiling on the fire, full of flesh and provisions for the entertainment of passengers who came that way, whom he received freely and without distinction, neither asking who they were nor whence they came. He had so much cattle of all kinds, that he is said to have possessed at one time seven herds of cows, each herd consisting of seven score, as well as immense flocks of sheep, and a noble stud of fine horses. The principal people of Leinster would often visit Buiciodh Brughach with their whole family and retinue, and quarter themselves upon him for some time, and when they left they scrupled not to carry away a drove of his cows, or to lay hands upon some of his horses and mares, for which they never thought of making him any kind of return. In this manner, Buiciodh soon became impoverished, and when at last his whole fortune was reduced to seven cows and a bull,

he removed with it secretly by night from his house at Dun Buiciodh, and taking with him his wife and his foster-child Eithne Ollamhdha, a maiden of great beauty, he travelled till he came to an extensive forest in the county of Meath, which was much frequented by king Cormac. In the wildest part of the wood he built a small hut with turf and branches, which served for a lodging for himself and his wife, as well as for the fair Eithne, who performed the duties of a servant towards her foster parents.

One day it happened that king Cormac rode out to divert himself in this wood, and chance led his steps to the neighbourhood of Buiciodh's hut, where he saw Eithne milking the cows, and he was immediately struck with her beauty. He observed that she had two vessels, into one of which as she took each cow she placed the richer and better part of the milk, and poured the thin milk into the other. When she had finished this task, Cormac, who remained concealed behind the branches, followed her with his eyes into the cottage, and soon had the satisfaction to see her return, with two vessels and a bowl, which she carried to a neighbouring spring of water, and using the bowl to lade with, she filled one vessel with the water that was near the surface, and poured into the other that which she laded from the middle of the spring, and which was cooler and clearer than the rest. She returned from the hut a third time, with a reaping-hook in her hand, and proceeded to a place where rushes grew, which she cut with her reaping-hook, and carefully separating those that were long and green from those that were short or withered, she laid them in different heaps. Cormac, unable any longer to repress his curiosity, rode up to her. The maiden was at first alarmed at being accosted by a man of rank in this solitary place, but he removed her fears by his words and behaviour, and, in answer to his questions, she informed him that she had made the selection of the best parts of the milk, water, and rushes, for her foster-father Buiciodh Brughach, who had brought her up from her infancy. The king immediately drew the hospitable herdsman from his confinement, gave him a valuable piece of land, well stocked with cattle, in the neighbourhood of Tara, and made the beautiful Eithne his queen.

Cormac was celebrated, not only for his magnificence and political talents, but he was a distinguished scholar, and he is said

to have made great reforms in the druidical and literary orders, and even to have discouraged the superstitions of paganism, and expressed opinions on religious matters which might fairly entitle him to the character of a free-thinker. Many of the military and political institutions ascribed to this king long outlived his age. He is said, moreover, to have endowed three academies at Tara: the first devoted to the cultivation of the science of war, the second to historical literature, and the third to jurisprudence. He also caused the annals of the kingdom, which, it is pretended, were kept regularly in the Psalter of Tara since the days of Ollamh, to be subjected to a general revision, and to be corrected and improved by the wisdom of the learned men of his court. In the course of his reign, considerable additions were made to the ancient code of laws entitled the Celestial Judgments.

Cormac appears to have been, in spite of his wisdom and scholarship, of an amorous disposition, and the charms of queen Eithne were not sufficient to rivet his affections to one object. On one occasion some of the chiefs of Ulster embarked in a marauding expedition to the coasts of Scotland, and among other plunder they carried off the beautiful Ciarnuit, daughter of the king of the Picts. King Cormac soon obtained possession of this prize, and he fitted up an apartment for the damsel in his palace at Tara, and "valued her beyond all the ladies of his court." The latter soon became jealous of her superiority, and the queen especially, who, however humble she might have been when she tended her foster-father's cottage, was now remarkable for her high spirit, resolved on taking vengeance upon the beautiful cause of the neglect shown to herself. By dint of expostulations and threats, she prevailed upon the king, who still loved his lawful consort, to deliver Ciarnuit into her hands, and as a punishment she placed her in close confinement, and obliged her to grind with a quern, or hand-mill, nine quarters of corn every day. The king, however, contrived still to gain access to her, and from this intercourse she became with child. As the time of her delivery drew near, she complained to her royal lover, with tears, of her inability to fulfil the cruel task which was still rigorously imposed upon her, and he delivered her from her servitude by bringing over from Scotland a skilful mechanic, who erected a mill that did the work without

hands. Thus were corn-mills introduced into Ireland.

After a reign of some years, chequered by wars and rebellions, this accomplished prince lost one of his eyes in resisting a traitorous attack in his palace, and it being a fundamental law of the kingdom that no one affected with a personal blemish should be capable of wearing the crown, Cormac abdicated the supreme power in favour of his son Cairbre Liffeachair, and retired to spend the rest of his days in a thatched cabin at Aicill, or Kells, in the same forest where he first met his wife Eithne. There he devoted himself to literary pursuits, and composed several works, of which the most celebrated was "The advice to a king," which he wrote for the instruction of his son and successor Cairbre, and which Keating describes as "worthy to be inscribed in golden characters for the information of princes, and as a most complete standard of policy to all ages." This book is said to have been extant as late as the seventeenth century, as well as a poem ascribed to the same royal author on the virtues of the number Three.

Among the chiefs who are stated to have lived in the reign of Cairbre, were Oisín, the son of Finn, (the Ossian of modern writers) and Finn Mac Cumhal, better known as Finn Mac Coul or Fingal, on whose names, and the remains of Irish romance relating to them, Macpherson built his splendid forgeries. These two individuals were chieftains of the celebrated Fianaa-Eirinn, or militia of Erin, the ancient national army whose exploits have been so often sung by the bards, and which was suppressed for its turbulence by king Cairbre. It had in fact been for some time divided into two rival septs, the clanna Boisgne, commanded by Oisín, and the clanna Morna, which was protected by the king of Munster. Continual feuds led to frequent and violent contentions, and one of these, between Goll and Finn Mac Cumhal, near Finn's palace at Almhain, on the mountain of Allen, in Leinster, had risen to such a height that it could only be appeased by the intervention of the bards, who shook the chain of silence between the chiefs, and succeeding in calming their animosity. The clanna Boisgne had become so presumptuous under the government of Cairbre, that they set the monarch of Ireland himself at defiance, and, assisted by the king of Munster, they made head against the royal

troops in the sanguinary battle of Gabhra, from which scarcely a man of the rebellious army escaped, except their leader Oisín. The victorious monarch slew Oisín's son, Osgar, with his own hand, but he himself received a wound which he survived but a short time. The causes of this war, the events which attended it, and its continuation during some following reigns, are the subject of many of the old poems and of the traditional legends of the Irish people. Two successive kings perished in battle against the insurgents, and the sanguinary battle of Dubhchomar, early in the fourth century, placed an usurper on the throne in the person of Colla Huas, one of three brothers bearing the same name.

Within five years, however, the rightful line was again restored in the person of Muredach Tíry, who compelled the usurper to abdicate, and the three Collas took refuge, with three hundred followers, in Scotland. They returned after a year's absence, and being, by the intervention of the druids, taken into the confidence of king Muredach, they were enabled by him to embark in new wars, and succeeded in depriving the king of Ulster of his dominions. In the course of this war, after a battle said to have lasted six days, the royal palace of Emania was entirely destroyed by the victorious army. Little need be said of the succeeding monarchs, until we come to the reign of Nial of the Nine Hostages, who reigned at the close of the fourth century of the Christian era. This king, after having carried over an army to Scotland to

assist the Dalriadic colony against the Picts, joined in a still more formidable invasion of the western districts of Britain, now left defenceless by the retreating Romans. Not content with this, or rather his appetite for plunder sharpened by the rich booty he carried home, Nial is said to have subsequently invaded Gaul, from which he brought home large numbers of captives with his plunder; but in a second expedition to Gaul, his career was suddenly cut short in the neighbourhood of Boulogne, where he was assassinated by one of his own soldiers. Dathy, who succeeded Nial on the throne of Ireland about the year 406, followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, and not only ravaged the maritime districts of Gaul, but marched inland until he reached the foot of the Alps. He was there killed by a flash of lightning, and his army immediately returned, bringing with them to Ireland the body of their king, who was interred with great pomp at Roilicna-Riogh, in Cruachan, the grand cemetery of the Milesian kings. He is said to have reigned twenty-three years, and was the last of the pagan kings of Ireland.*

* These pretended expeditions into Gaul bear a singular resemblance to the similar expeditions ascribed to king Arthur, in the fabulous history of Geoffrey of Monmouth. In the dark obscurity which involves our knowledge of the history of this period, we cannot say that Irish marauders may not have infested the Gallic coasts, as no doubt they did the coasts of Britain, where they took a part in the internal wars at the end of the Roman occupation. But we know enough of the history of Gaul, to be assured that no invasions, like those ascribed in the Irish annals to Nial and Dathy, took place there.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST AGES OF CHRISTIANITY IN IRELAND.



HE time was now arrived when the "sacred isle" of antiquity was destined, under a totally new faith, to merit the appellation of "the island of saints." The history of early Christianity in Ireland is obscure and doubtful, precisely in proportion as it is unusually copious. If legends entered largely into the

civil history of the country, they found their way tenfold into the history of the church, because there the tendency to believe in them was much greater, as well as the inducements to invent and adopt them. Although legends are not history, they form no unimportant portion of it, for they often paint to us the character and sentiments of the age better than history itself, and in the present instance they at least give us the notions formed at the earliest period when we have

any historical records of the conversion of the Irish. We must be content with these notions until we arrive at a period when contemporary and authentic documents come to our aid.

Among the captives said to have been brought into Ireland by king Nial, from his first expedition to the Gallic court, supposed by chronologists to have occurred in the year 403, was a youth of sixteen, to whom history has given the name of Patrick. On their arrival in Ireland, he was sold as a slave to a chief named Milcho, who carried him to his home in the north, in a district now known as the county of Antrim. According to some accounts he was there employed as a shepherd; according to others it was his duty to tend his master's swine; all agree that, during six years of bondage, the leisure of the young captive was constantly devoted to prayer and meditation. The principal scene of Patrick's devotions was the solitary mountain of Sleibh-Mis, celebrated for more than one remarkable event in the annals of Ireland. The manner in which the youth escaped from servitude is also differently related: according to one account, there was a law at that time in the island that all slaves should become free in the seventh year of their bondage; the common legend states, that by divine intimation he discovered a treasure which enabled him to purchase his liberty;* but the generally received version of the story is, that in obedience to an admonition from heaven, conveyed to him in a dream, Patrick fled from his master, reached the south-western coast of Ireland in safety, and there embarked in a merchant vessel, which carried him home to Gaul. There are almost as many conflicting claims to the honour of being the birth place of St. Patrick, as there were in the case of Homer; various legends make him a native of Britain, of Wales, of Gaul, of Ireland, and even of Scotland, but most of them agree in stating that his mother was named Conquessa, and that she was the sister of St. Martin of Tours. To him Patrick now went to seek the instruction which his misfortune had deprived him of the opportunity of gaining, and in his college at Tours, he is said to have become not only profoundly learned in the

theological doctrines of the catholic church, but a proficient in a variety of languages, including the British, Gallic, Irish, Latin, and Greek.* He next placed himself under St. Germanus of Auxerre, and with him and in Italy he spent several years in perfecting himself in the monastic discipline.

In 429, St. Patrick is said to have accompanied the two Gallic saints, Germanus and Lupus, in their pretended expedition to Britain, to eradicate from that country the errors of Pelagianism. Long previous to this, he appears to have aspired to be the apostle of the still Pagan Irish, to convert whom an unsuccessful attempt was made by a deacon of the Roman church named Palladius, represented as having been sent thither by Pope Celestine in 431 as first bishop of the Irish; but driven from the shore by the inhospitality of the natives, he was cast by a storm on the coast of Scotland, where he died among the Picts, without having accomplished his mission. St. Germanus had recommended Patrick to the Pope as a fit person to follow Palladius, and he was on his way to the scene of his labours when he received intelligence of his death. Patrick landed first, it appears, on the coast of Dublin, some time in the year 432, but meeting with no encouragement there, and repulsed at other places on the eastern coast, he proceeded towards the north, and landed somewhere in the neighbourhood of Strangford. The legendary lives of the saint relate many miracles which he performed in his progress, chiefly acts of vengeance to punish the obstinate unbelief of the natives, and frequently directed against inanimate objects, such as depriving rivers of their fish and turning fertile districts into bogs. When he now attempted to penetrate into the interior of Ulster, the chief of the district, named Dichu, came forth with his attendants to arrest him in his route, and had even raised his sword to strike the holy preacher, when his hand was arrested by a miracle, and this, joined with the eloquence of the missionary and the sanctity of his aspect, so far worked upon Dichu,

* A very ancient sequence of the saint, printed by Messingham from an old manuscript, says:—

A piratis venditur,
Fit custos porcorum;
Aurum quo redimitur
Reperit decorum.

* The oldest life of St. Patrick was composed about the end of the tenth century by a Latin author named Probus. In the twelfth century appeared the two larger lives, by William of Malmsbury, and Jocelin of Furness. These are the oldest authorities for the legend, if we except a narrative in Latin, said to be written by Patrick himself, and entitled his *Confession*, but believed by the best writers to be a spurious production.

that he and the whole of his family were converted to the word of God. Under his protection St. Patrick began to preach and celebrate divine worship in a humble barn near his residence, which from that time took the name of Sabhul-Phadruig, or Patrick's Barn; he afterwards built a church on the site, and made it his favourite resort.

The bitterest enemies of Christianity were the druids, whose interest it was above all others to support the ancient belief of their forefathers; and many of these, who are described in the Christian narrative as magi, or magicians, were the objects of Patrick's miracles, and were sacrificed for their obstinate hostility. A druid of Dichu's territory carried his insults so far as contemptuously to interrupt the holy service one day that St. Patrick was administering in the barn of Sabhul-Phadruig, on which the earth suddenly opened and swallowed up the sacrilegious offender. Dichu had a brother named Rius, an old man, as wicked as he was ugly, who, enraged at the conversion of Dichu and at the fate of the druid, persecuted the saint by every means in his power. At last the aged blasphemer dared him to perform a miracle on his person as a condition of his believing in the Gospel; Patrick held up his hand, and the ugly old man was suddenly changed into a beautiful youth. A miracle like this was not to be resisted; Rius was immediately baptized, and his example was followed by many of those who had hitherto refused to listen to the words of salvation.

Patrick was now seized with a violent desire to visit the scene of his earlier devotions, the mountain of Sleibh-Mis, and he hoped to effect the conversion of his old master, Milcho. He proceeded, therefore, to his residence in the district of Dalaradia, inhabited by the Irish Picts, but he found in Milcho one of the most obstinate champions of the ancient Paganism, who, furious at the progress made by his quondam slave in the hearts of his countrymen, is said in a fit of madness to have set fire to his own house and substance, and thrown himself into the flames. His two daughters listened to the preacher, and were baptized. St. Patrick returned into Down, converting on his way a young swineherd, who afterwards obtained a place in the Irish calendar as St. Mochua; and he soon afterwards baptized another youth, who became his inseparable companion, and is still better known in Irish

legend by the name of St. Benignus. It is not necessary for us to follow the legendary lives any further in their enumeration of the particular conversions and miracles of the saint.

When St. Patrick set foot in Ireland, the king of the island was Laogaire, the son of Nial of the Nine Hostages, who had succeeded Dathy in A.D. 427 or 428. He is represented in the legendary histories of St. Patrick as a tyrannical prince, devoted to the gentilism of his ancestors, the slave of his druids and magicians, and consequently a bitter enemy of the Christians. While St. Patrick remained in Down, Easter approached, the period at which the princes and states of the whole kingdom were to hold their grand assembly at Tara; and the courageous preacher of the Gospel determined to attend there, and proclaim publicly his mission by celebrating the Christian festival in the very heart of Paganism. He accordingly embarked in a frail vessel, and, following the coast to the south, arrived with a small party of trusty companions at the mouth of the Boyne, whence he proceeded by land to the plain of Breagh, in which the city of Tara was situated. It was at his first resting place, when leaving his ship, that he converted St. Benignus, who accompanied him to the seat of the Irish monarch. Towards the evening of the next day, which was Easter eve, the missionaries arrived at an elevated spot at no great distance from the plain of Breagh, then called Feartfethin, in the modern district of Slane, where St. Patrick determined to halt and light the paschal fire, according to the custom then observed by the Christian church. It happened that this was the very moment at which the Pagan Irish were accustomed to light the sacred fire of the bealtinne, and king Laogaire, with all the chiefs of his kingdom, and the druids and Celtic priesthood, were assembled in the royal palace of Teamhair at Tara, to perform the ceremony, previous to which, according to their usage, strict orders had been issued that every other fire in the country around should be extinguished. The bealtinne fire arose as usual in majestic grandeur, but great was the astonishment of the prince and his court when they saw it answered by the rival fires from the heights of Feartfethin. When the monarch inquired angrily who it was that had dared to infringe the law which had been rendered sacred by the usage of centuries, one of his principal druids, who

boasted, like the rest of his order, of the gift of prophecy, came forward, and, addressing Laogaire, said, "O king, the fire which we see, unless it be extinguished this night, will burn for ever, and it will rise above all the fires of our ancient rites; and the man who lights it will, before long, scatter thy kingdom." So, in the first impulse of his anger, the king gathered together his chariots and his horsemen, and hurried forwards to extinguish at once the fire by which he was threatened; but his first warmth was soon abated, and he stopped half way to listen again to his druids, who persuaded the king that he was doing too much honour to the offender by going to him in person, and therefore messengers were despatched to summon St. Patrick into his presence. The meeting, according to the legend, was more like a battle than a discussion of faith and doctrines; the king's attendants rose against the missionaries to slay them, but they fell paralysed before the divine power which protected the saints, until Laogaire's queen, with the instinctive piety which so often distinguished her sex, fell reverently on her knees before St. Patrick, and prayed that the wrath of heaven might be withheld until he should have an opportunity of declaring his doctrines in peace on the morrow.

The king returned to Tara, to pass an uneasy night in his palace of Teamhair, and the legendary writers accuse him of having, under the weight of his apprehensions of what the morrow might produce, hired assassins in the different places through which the saint must pass, to take away his life. All these, however, St. Patrick escaped, and he was allowed on the day of Easter to declare and explain publicly the mysteries of Christianity before the assembled court. On his arrival at the palace, when he entered the royal hall, he found the king at supper, and no one of the guests arose to salute him, with the exception of the royal poet Dubhtach, who, suddenly struck with conviction, declared publicly his belief in Christ, and his willingness to receive the rights of baptism. From this moment, the legendist tells us, he exerted the talents which had formerly been devoted to the service of his false gods in composing poems in praise of the Almighty and his saints.*

* Baptizatus namque et in fide Christi confirmatus carmina quæ quondam studio florescente peregit in laudem falsorum deorum, jam in usum meliorem mentem mutans et linguam, poemata clariosa composuit in laudem omnipotentis Dei et sanctorum ejus præconium.

Laogaire and his family, however, continued deaf to the admonitions of the preacher, although no further hindrance appears to have been thrown in the way of the fulfilment of his mission, except that which he experienced from the interruptions and plots of the druids. Before leaving Meath, St. Patrick attended the celebration of the Tealtain games, and preached with success to the vast multitudes assembled on that occasion. Among his converts was the king's brother, Conal, who gave his house, called Rath-Yrtair, in the county of Meath, for a church, and it received from its new possessor the name of Donagh-Phadruig. The saint and his companions next made a progress through Connaught to the western coast of the island. In their way towards the plains of Connaught, as they passed near the royal residence of Cruachan, at day-break one morning, the missionaries came to a fair fountain, and they there began to chaunt their morning service. It happened at the same time that the two beautiful daughters of king Laogaire, Eithne and Feidhlim, had left their father's residence to proceed to the fountain to bathe, and they were astonished to find the place occupied by a group of men of saint-like appearance, clad in white garments, with books in their hands, and fancied them some of the spiritual beings with which their national creed had peopled the woods and fountains. As the two damsels approached with reverence, Patrick addressed himself to them, told them his mission, explained to them the word of God, and held forth the hope of salvation. The princesses were struck with conviction, and rejecting the errors in which they had been so carefully instructed by their father's druids, received baptism in the same fountain, and dedicated themselves to the service of Christ. Patrick now continued his journey through Connaught, con-

Jocelin. Vit. S. Patric. cap. xlv. It is hardly necessary to point out the application of the words of Boethius, lib. i., metr. 1:—

Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi
Flebilis, heu, mæstos cogor inire modos.

The Irish bibliographers attributed several Christian poems to the poet Dubhtach, of which some are pretended to be extant.

We may remark a considerable resemblance in the general outline between St. Patrick's mission to the court of Laogaire and that of Paulinus to Edwin the Pagan king of the Northumbrian Saxons, as related by Bede, Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. cc. 12, 13. The Saxon priest or bard Coifi acts there nearly the part of the Irish poet Dubhtach. All these legends are, in fact, built upon one another.

verting the inhabitants by thousands, ordaining priests, and building churches, and on one occasion it is remarked by the old writer of the legend that, being in a neighbourhood where stone or wood were not easily to be procured, the saint built his church of mud. From Connaught the missionaries proceeded northwards, into the district of Dalradia, and thence they passed over the mountain of "Ficoth," across the plain of Breagh, through Meath into Leinster, success attending constantly on their steps. When they had crossed a little river named Finglas, and ascended a gentle eminence about a mile from a hamlet, then called Athcliath, but since known by the name of Dublin, Patrick is said to have gazed on the spot in contemplation, and to have uttered involuntarily the prophetic words, "This hamlet, now so small, will rise in time to great celebrity; it will spread out in riches and dignity, and will go on increasing until it become the metropolis of the kingdom." To show his love for this place, St. Patrick struck the earth with the "staff of Jesus," which he had brought with him into the island, and a fountain sprang forth, which was afterwards called St. Patrick's well. The king or chief of the district, named Alphin, who resided here, received the missionaries with favour, and he and the inhabitants of Dublin embraced the Christian faith; and Patrick conferred his blessing on the future city, and proceeded towards the south to contend with idolaters who were more obstinate in their errors.

One of these, named Foylge, indignant at the destruction of an idol which was the especial object of his worship, placed some of his men in ambush on the road through which Patrick had to pass, and the charioteer of the saint (who appears to have travelled generally in a car), being mistaken for his master, was slain before his face. He was treated more hospitably when he entered the province of Munster, the king of which received him with great reverence in his palace on the rock of Cashel, the ancient seat of the monarchs of Momonia, or Munster. There existed a tradition that one of the earlier kings had received at this spot a divine intimation of the future establishment of Christianity in Ireland; and the prince who now reigned, with his family and people, listened to the preaching of St. Patrick, and were baptised. When the king of Munster bowed before the preacher to receive his benediction, Patrick's pastoral staff (he had

been ordained a bishop before entering upon his mission) accidentally rested on the royal foot, and piercing it, the ground was stained with his blood. Neither the saint nor the king observed the wound till the ceremony was ended, and then the former, having cured it by making the sign of the cross, held his hand over his royal convert, and added to his blessing the prophetic words, "In memory of this blood now shed, the blood of no king of thy line who shall reign in this place shall ever be shed, except one;" and the annalists of Munster ages afterwards declared that, with one exception only, the kings of that district died in peace. A magnificent church was afterwards erected on the rock of Cashel, the remains of which form one of the noblest monastic ruins in Ireland; and in it is still preserved the Leac-Phadruig, or Patrick's-stone, the table on which the kings of Munster were crowned. St. Patrick remained several years labouring in the conversion of the people of Munster and Connaught before he returned to Ulster, the first scene of his success. He had already built churches on most of the spots which had been previously consecrated to the rites of druidism; but when he came to Usneach in Meath, a place celebrated in Irish fable, with the intention of founding a church there, he was driven away opprobriously by the two chiefs of the district, who were brothers, and the saint was proceeding to strike them with his malediction, when his disciple St. Secundinus interfered, and begged that the curse might be laid on the stones of the neighbourhood. In consequence of this curse, the stones of Usneach became unfit for building, and if any one persisted in erecting a house with them, it never failed to fall down soon after it was completed. The cursed stones of Usneach became proverbial among the Irish.

After having thus planted the Gospel in all the four provinces of Ireland, St. Patrick was desirous of perfecting its ecclesiastical government, and he prepared for the establishment of a metropolitan see. For this purpose he selected an elevated place, not far from the ancient palace of Emania, then called Druim-Saileach, of which he obtained a grant from the king of the district, and there he built the cathedral of Armagh. At this place, and at his favourite retreat at Sabhul-Phadruig, where he had first preached the Gospel to the Irish, St. Patrick is said to have passed the remainder of his life. The legend states, that after the establish-

ment of the see of Armagh, the saint went to Rome, to obtain from the Pope a confirmation of all he had done in his mission, and the grant of privileges to his church; but the more judicious writers on the subject who accept the outline of the history of St. Patrick, have declared their belief that he never left Ireland after he entered the island as a missionary of the faith of the Redeemer. It was on his return from this alleged visit to Rome, that St. Patrick is said to have performed the celebrated miracle by which he collected together the venomous reptiles from every part of Ireland on the summit of a mountain on the coast of Mayo, called from this circumstance Cruach-Phadruig, and from thence hurled them into the waves of the Atlantic. We are told that from this moment Ireland has been free from every kind of noxious reptile; but it must not be forgotten that the island possessed this character long before the age in which the saint is supposed to have lived, as we perceive from the Roman writers. The legend adds that Patrick cleared the island of demons at the same time he drove away its reptiles, and that in a short time it became so filled with holy monks and nuns, that it received by pre-eminence the honourable title of "the island of saints."

About the year 465, according to the calculation of the best chronologists, St. Patrick was seized with a severe malady, in his retirement at Sabhul, and feeling the approach of death, he set out to reach Armagh, which he wished, as his episcopal see, to be his last resting place. He had proceeded part of the way in his slow progress, when, warned, it is said, by the voice of an angel, which told him it was God's will he should die in Ulster, at the place where his preaching first met with success, he returned to Sabhul-Phadruig, and died there a week after, on the 17th of March, 465, (on which day his festival is kept), having then reached the seventy-eighth year of his age. Some of the legends make him live to the advanced age of a hundred and thirty. His convert St. Brigid attended at his death-bed. The news of St. Patrick's death was soon carried abroad, and the clergy crowded from all parts to be present at his obsequies, the ceremonies attendant upon which lasted during several days. It had been made known to the saint before his death, that heaven willed him to be buried in Down; but the people of Armagh were jealous of the treasure which was thus to be given to

the keeping of their neighbours of Ulster, and when the day of burial came they assembled in great numbers, resolved to attack the convoy, and carry off the body of the saint. A cart drawn by oxen carried the corpse in solemn procession towards Down, when the people of Armagh made a sudden onset, seized upon the cart, and turned the heads of the oxen towards the episcopal see. Thus they proceeded until they came to the borders of Armagh, and were passing a little river called Caucune, when, to their surprise, cart, and oxen, and corpse, suddenly disappeared, and they found that they had been following a shadow, miraculously raised up to draw them away, while the real body of the saint had proceeded without interruption to Down, where it was safely deposited in the earth, and a handsome church was afterwards built over his remains. The bodies of his disciple St. Brigid and of St. Columba were afterwards deposited in the same grave.* In later times the monks of Malmsbury had forged, or received from tradition, a legend that Patrick had left Ireland in his later years, and become abbot of their house, and that the body of the saint, as well as those of his disciples Brigid, Benignus, and Indractus, lay buried in Malmsbury church, and they claimed the honour of possessing these relics with so much persistence, that we are assured many Irishmen went thither in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to pay reverence to their holy remains.

Among the more celebrated females said to have been converted by the preaching of St. Patrick, was St. Brigid, already mentioned as attending on his death-bed, who, it is pretended by some of his biographers, wove the shroud in which he was buried. Other writers, however, place the birth of Brigid only a few years before Patrick's death. St. Brigid is regarded as the introducer of female monachism into Ireland. According to the legend as given in Capgrave, there was a man of Leinster named Dubhtach, who bought a captive maiden named Brochsech, whom, as was then a common practice, he compelled to submit to his embraces. When Dubhtach's wife saw the servant was pregnant, she became sorrowful, and said to her husband, "Go and sell the maiden, lest her offspring,

* A Leonine distich, popular in the middle ages, commemorated the place of burial of the three saints:—

In burgo Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno
Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba pius.

if brought up in thine house, should some day lord it over mine." The man, with some reluctance, obeyed his wife, and sold Brochsech to a magician or druid, in whose house she soon afterwards became the mother of St. Brigid, who in spite of the example set her by her master (for the daughter of a serf remained always a serf), was at a very early age seized with the love of Christian piety, and at length, when freed by the interference of the king or chief of the district, she took the veil, and collecting a number of her sex, who burnt with the same devotional ardour, she established the first Irish nunnery.

Brigid established her first cell under the shade of a lofty oak, which was probably rendered sacred by the superstitions of druidism, for the earliest Christian establishments among the converted Pagans of the West were almost invariably established on the sites of older heathen worship. This rude establishment was from this circumstance named Kill-dara, or the cell of the oak, and, increasing rapidly in extent from the crowds of devotees attracted thither by her sanctity, it became the nucleus of the city since so well known by the name of Kildare. A further proof of the sacred character of the spot selected by Brigid for her monastery, is found in the circumstance that the holy fire which the druids had nourished there, was taken under the charge of the sisterhood, and so well did the Virgins of Christ attend to it, that Giraldus Cambrensis, at the end of the twelfth century, reports the common belief that during so many ages the sacred fire of St. Brigid at Kildare had never been extinguished.

In her pious retreat at Kildare, St. Brigid was the sure refuge of the unfortunate, especially of those of her own sex, and the island was soon filled with the reports of her charity, her benevolence, and her miracles. Of these, we may repeat two, as pictures of the manners of the age. The first illustrates the legendary story of her own birth. A certain chief of Leinster, of a wicked and luxurious disposition, but of great power, lived at no great distance from Kildare; his lust was excited by the charms of a woman of the neighbourhood, who refused to listen to his advances, and he set his mind to work to contrive the means of obtaining possession of her. With this object, he one day entrusted to her care a silver brooch, which he afterwards caused to be purloined by

stealth, and thrown into the sea. When the maiden, on being required to restore the article entrusted to her, was unable to give any account of it, her persecutor accused her of theft, and demanded that she should be delivered to him as his slave, and the law or the custom of the land, it appears, recognised his claim. The maiden, seeing no way left of preserving her chastity, fled to the cell of Kildare, and invoked the protection of its holy occupant; and St. Brigid received her with kindness, and invoked heaven in her favour. In the course of their interview a fisherman brought some fish he had newly caught as an offering to the saint, in one of which was found the identical brooch of silver, the loss of which had caused so much sorrow.

On another occasion, one of her countrymen was entering the king's palace, when he saw a fox walking across the path. Ignorant of the fact that it was a tame animal to which the monarch was much attached on account of the entertaining tricks it had been taught to perform, and taking it for a wild beast, the visitor struck it with his weapon and slew it. The king, in great anger, condemned the offender to death, unless he produced immediately another fox equally well instructed with the one he had killed. The task was an impossible one, and the unfortunate individual who had thus forfeited his life prepared to meet his fate, when St. Brigid came unexpectedly to his assistance. Having heard the circumstances of the case, she ordered a horse to be harnessed to her car, and proceeded in all haste towards the king's court. Her way lay through a wood, and as she passed it she called out, and a wild fox instantly emerged from the brushwood, walked tamely towards the car, and, leaping up, seated itself quietly by her side. With this companion she continued her journey, and when ushered into the presence of the monarch, and informed of his grief for the loss of his tame animal, she ordered her fox to stand forth, on which it went through all the performances of the deceased fox with so much exactitude, that the king was delighted beyond measure, and ordered the man who had offended through ignorance to be set at liberty.

The death of St. Brigid is placed in the year 525, when she is said to have reached her seventy-fourth year. She is generally supposed to have been buried at Kildare, but the people of Ulster declared that her remains had been deposited at Down, by the

side of those of St. Patrick, and the Picts and Scots were equally obstinate in the belief that they lay at Abernethy. We have already stated that the monks of Glastonbury fancied their monastery to have been her last resting-place. It was about the period of her death that the pious legends make the island to abound most in holy professors of the Gospel; and one of them assures us that the school of Finian, abbot of Cluain-eraird (Clonard), whom he styles the "master of the saints of Ireland," ("magister sanctorum Hiberniæ,") contained alone "three thousand saints." One of these was the celebrated St. Columba, more popularly known as Columbkille, who is stated to have been four years old at the time of St. Brigid's death, having been born in 521. He soon distinguished himself above all his fellows by the ardour of his religious zeal, and when no more than twenty-five years of age he founded a monastery at Doire Calgach, near Lough Foyle, from whence the name of Derry was subsequently derived. He soon founded another monastery in the south of Meath, at a spot named Dair-magh, or the Plain of Oaks, which was long celebrated in the ecclesiastical history of Ireland. Columba appears subsequently to have been driven out of Ireland by the feuds of the native princes, to whom his fiery zeal seems often to have given offence; and he settled in the island of Hy, or Iona, where he founded that famous monastery which was the star of the Christianity of Scotland and the western isles. He died at Iona, it is said, in his seventysixth year.

From his favourite isle in the western waves, Columba is represented as constantly interfering in the political affairs of Ireland, as well as of Scotland. His relationship by blood with some of the most powerful and turbulent of the Irish chiefs, gave him a peculiar interest in all the social movements of his native country. One of the most remarkable events in which he is said to have taken an active part, was the great convention at Drumceat, which was called together to deliberate on a difficult question relating to the sovereignty of the Irish district of Dalaradia. At this assembly new complaints arose against the influence and tyranny of the bardic or literary class, and they had become so unpopular by their numbers and insolence, that it was again proposed to suppress all their privileges. But Columba stood forward in their defence,

and they are said to have been saved, with some of their immunities, by his exertions alone. Perhaps he considered himself as belonging in some degree to their order. A story, told by the writers of his life as an instance of his miraculous foresight of future events, shows us that he was not unwilling to associate with the bards of his native land. One day, we are told, as the saint and his brethren were resting themselves in a house near a river in Ireland, they received a visit from an Irish "poet," or minstrel, named Coronan. When he was gone, the companions of Columba inquired why he had permitted Coronan to depart without asking him to chaunt one of his usual lays. The saint replied, "How could I ask for a song of joy from that miserable man, who at this moment, struck by the weapons of his enemies, is in the agonies of death!" These words were scarcely uttered, when the whole party were roused by a cry from the other side of the river, and a man informed them that the bard who had been their guest had just been murdered.

We cannot read these lives of the early Irish saints without being struck with the remarkable manner in which the Pagan institutions continued to exist under Christian names and forms. The sacred virgins of gentile Ireland were perpetuated in the nuns of St. Brigid, who continued to tend the holy fire that in earlier times had so often lit the baaltinne at Tara; and in like manner the druids, with their inviolable character, their visions of second sight, and their powers of prophecy, continued to live in the persons of the Christian monks, who were now called upon as councillors by the Irish chiefs, precisely in the same manner as they had formerly consulted their druids. This was peculiarly the case with the St. Columba of the Christian legend, and it is perhaps to the Pagan superstitions of his countrymen that we must attribute his visions and prophecies. Thus the Irish king Aldan, before going to battle, went to ask Columba which of his three adult sons was destined to succeed him on the throne. Columba answered, "Neither of those three will reign, for they will be slain before thee in the war; but thou hast younger sons, bring them to me, and he who shall rush into my arms will be thy successor." The king did as he was told, and one of his younger children, named in the legend Euchodius, went directly to the saint and threw himself in his bosom. This child became king after his father.

People of all ranks went in this manner to consult St. Columba on future events. Once, according to the legend, two "plebeians" went to him in Iona to inquire what would be the fate of their two eldest sons. To the first he said, "It is now Saturday; thy son will be dead next Friday, and will be buried in this island this day week." To the other inquirer he said, "Thy son will live to see his grand-children, and he also will be buried in this island, but at a very advanced age."

It must be acknowledged that, with all this seemingly abundant information, the history of early Christianity in Ireland is involved in the greatest obscurity. The name of St. Patrick, totally unknown to Bede, who took so much interest in the Irish church, and obtained all his information from Irish ecclesiastics, is not mentioned in any writing in the authenticity of which we can place confidence previous to the tenth or eleventh century. The same may be said of St. Brigid; and the "lives" of the other Irish saints are probably none of them so old, if we except only that of Columba ascribed to Adamnan.* Yet we are sure that, by whatever means it may have been introduced, Christianity was established in Ireland in the sixth century, and that men who afterwards attained to high celebrity in the history of Europe went thence to aid in the conversion of the Franks and the Germans. Among these we may mention the names of St. Columbanus and St. Gall, who were born towards the middle of the sixth century; Columbanus settled at Luxeuil, in eastern France, while St. Gall proceeded to Switzerland, and laid the foundations of the celebrated abbey which has ever since been known by his name. Among the numerous manuscripts in the rich library of this establishment are still found a few fragments written apparently in Irish, which, by their evident antiquity, may have come from the pen of some of this first band of missionaries.

* A careful perusal of the life of Columba ascribed to Adamnan, raises many doubts in my own mind as to its authenticity, and indeed as to its having been written till long after his age. It is singular that Bede, who speaks with so much interest of St. Columba, and who was well acquainted with the life and writings of Adamnan, should not mention a life of Columba by him. The language and peculiarities of the life of St. Brigid, which goes under the name of Cogitosus, also bespeak a much later period than the sixth century, when it is supposed to have been written. The writer speaks of an archbishop of Ireland; when it is generally understood that no such dignity existed till a much later period.

The lives of the Irish saints, written in Latin, are very numerous. Like everything Irish, they are filled with wild and picturesque legends—the romance of the ecclesiastical history of Ireland. But they describe the manners of the sister island in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and not those of the fifth and sixth; although it is probable that the intervening period had produced very little change in the general character of Irish manners.* The establishment of Christianity must, however, have altered in many respects the face of society, and the institutions of public life. The monks brought in the study of the Latin language and the use of the Roman alphabet, and it soon superseded the old Irish Ogham characters, which were only applicable to inscriptions and charms, and could never be used for writing books. What we now call the Irish characters, are only a corruption of the Roman alphabet as written in the earlier ages of Christianity in the island, and they differ but little from the form of the Roman character which we call Anglo-Saxon. With the use of these characters, books began to multiply, and we are now approaching a period when we can place more confidence in the records of Irish history; at least we have not the same reasons for rejecting it. The Irish writers tell us that Dubhtach the poet, St. Patrick's bardic convert, with other persons of eminence, urged the saint to undertake a revision of the Irish annals, which he declined, on account of his own ignorance of Irish history; but they assert that a commission was appointed for the purpose under his especial superintendence. This is of course but a fable. We find, however, that from about this period the Irish annalists begin to notice the reigns of contemporary sovereigns in other countries—a first attempt at chronological accuracy.

During the period while the gospel of peace was thus planting itself on the Irish soil, we learn from the historical annals that that soil was moistened with blood which flowed from the perpetual feuds of its princes. Laogaire himself was often engaged in these domestic broils; and he was involved in a still more important war with the people of Leinster, who, guided by a chief named Criomthan, refused to pay the odious tribute which had been imposed on

* The largest collection of the lives of the Irish Saints, published in the original Latin, is that by Colgan, in folio, printed at Louvaine, in 1647.

them by king Tuathal. The troops of Connaught were defeated with great slaughter in an obstinate battle celebrated by the Irish bards, and called, from the place where it was fought, the battle of Ath-dara, or of the Ford of the Oaks. Loagaire himself fell into the hands of the victors, and he was only set at liberty after he had taken the ancient and solemn oath of his forefathers, called the "oath of the sun, wind, and elements," that during the remainder of his life he would never again claim the payment of the tribute. The Irish annalists place the battle of Ath-dara in the year 457. Within a year the monarch infringed his oath, relieved from it, it is said, by the abolition of his druids; and a few weeks afterwards, in the year 458, he was killed in an excursion among the mountains, some historians say by lightning, and his countrymen believed that it was the sun, wind, and elements, which had conspired in his destruction to revenge the slight he had put upon them by the breach of his oath.

After the death of Laogaire, the throne was occupied by an usurper, Olill Molt, descended from another branch of the family of Heremon, and the son of Dathy, Laogaire's predecessor. Lughadh, the son of Laogaire, thus excluded from his right to the sceptre, gathered together his adherents to obtain it by force of arms, and the great battle of Ocha, in which Olill Molt was defeated and slain, fixed the descendants of Nial of the Nine Hostages firmly on the throne of Ireland. The old law of succession, established by king Tuathal, which excluded from the throne all the other lines of the royal Milesian race but his own, was thus finally set aside. Twenty years after the battle of Ocha, which the Irish annalists accept as a technical period in their chronology, the sons of Eirck went from Ireland to assist the Irish Dalriadic colony established in Scotland, and contributed much to its establishment and power. From these, through the Scottish kings and the English Stuarts, the royal blood of Ireland has descended to the present royal family of England.

The reigns of the monarchs who succeeded Olill Molt were distinguished chiefly by the same petty wars which had scarcely ever ceased to devastate the island. Lughaidh is said to have reigned twenty-five years; and his successor Murcertach, the grandson of Eirck, after reigning twenty-one years and fighting five battles, was drowned in a

hogshead of wine. He is considered to have been the first Christian king of all Ireland. His successor, Tuathal Maolearbh, who ascended the throne in 527, reigned nine years, and then left it to Diarmid, the friend and patron of St. Kieran, who had helped to conceal him from persecution during the reign of his predecessor. Under this monarch occurred two celebrated events in Irish history, the foundation of the great monastery of Clonmacnois by St. Kieran, and the desertion of the palace of Tara. The latter event is placed in the year 554, and is commonly reported to have arisen from the following incident. A criminal, who had fled for sanctuary to the monastery of St. Ruan, was dragged forcibly from his asylum, and carried to Tara, where he was put to death. The abbot and his monks exclaimed loudly against the violation of the sanctuary, and, proceeding in solemn procession to the palace, they pronounced the curse of heaven on its walls. The Irish annalists tell us that "from that day no king ever sat again at Tara;" and the bards of later ages, less slavishly devoted to the church than the annalists, lamented over the fate of the ancient glory of Ireland. One of them, who is supposed to have lived near the time, exclaims mournfully, "It is not with my will that Teamhair is deserted." The monks in their exultation raised a monastery near the spot, and they gave it the name of "The monastery of the curse of Ireland"—it was the last victory of the religion of Christ over expiring Paganism.

In the pages of the native annalists, two kinds of events fill the reigns of the Irish monarchs of this period, their battles with subordinate chiefs, and their connection with monks and ecclesiastics. Diarmid, we have just seen, was the friend of St. Kieran. A rival, though afterwards a friendly monarch, the generous and charitable Guaire, king of Connaught, was the friend—some say the brother—of St. Mochua. Among other stories told of the prince and saint, there is one that furnishes a remarkable example of their wild character. Mochua once retired to a cell by a solitary fountain of pure spring water, five miles distant from his brother's palace at Durlus Guaire, that he might pass the period of Lent in strict fasting, and he took with him only a single clerk as his companion. Their single meal each day consisted of a small portion of coarse barley bread with water-cresses and water from the fountain. Mochua bore through the peni-

tential abstinence without fainting, but when Easter-day arrived, his clerk was able to support this diet no longer, and he begged in the most supplicating manner to be allowed to go to the king's table at Durlus and eat meat. St. Mochua, satisfied with the patience he had already shewn, promised to indulge his appetite, but he told him that he need not give himself the trouble to visit the palace, as the provisions should be brought to him there in his cell. The saint then fell to the ground and prayed. It happened that the servants were at that moment laying the dinner on the table before the king and his guests, and the surprise of the latter was great when they saw the dishes carried away as quick as they came by an invisible hand. They all mounted their horses, and galloped after the dishes, which they saw travelling rapidly through the air. The latter however arrived first at the cell, and presented themselves with great submission before St. Mochua and his clerk, when, after grace had been duly said by the saint, the servant fell to eating with a rather voracious appetite. Just as he had commenced, the horsemen made their appearance, and, struck with terror, he began to lament his greediness, and wish that his desire had not been listened to; but the saint told him to proceed with his meal without apprehension, and having offered a short petition to heaven, the men and their horses were fixed immoveably to the spot where they first saw them, until the clerk had eaten his fill, and then another prayer set them at liberty, and they came humbly to St. Mochua and desired his benediction. The saint immediately gave the king his blessing, and desired him and his attendants to eat their dinner in that place, and they lost no time in complying with his invitation. The road from Durlus to the fountain is still called in Irish Bothur-na-

Mias, or the road of the dishes, in commemoration of this event.

It is further related of St. Mochua that he often retired into a solitary cell, taking with him for companions no living creatures except a cock, a mouse, and a fly. The first of these animals served the purpose of a clock, and gave notice to the saint of the approach of the hour when the church required him to say his morning prayers; the mouse stationed itself at his ear, during his sleep, and roused him when his slumber had lasted the appointed time; the fly attended on him while reading, walking along the lines of the book as the saint proceeded, and when his eyes were tired and he desisted a moment from his study, the fly rested on the first letter of the next sentence to direct him where to recommence. At length these three faithful attendants died, and St. Mochua despatched a special messenger to St. Columba or Columbkille in Scotland, to acquaint him with his grief and with the cause of it, and to require his spiritual consolation. Fables like these shew us how little we can depend upon the Irish histories of the progress of Christianity in these early ages.

Two brothers, descendants of Nial, reigned after Diarmid, and were followed by several kings in succession, the annals of whose reigns are too meagre and uninteresting to merit our notice. Under Aodh, the fifth king from Diarmid, occurred the great convention to settle the claims to Dalaradia, and the attempted suppression of the bardic order, alluded to above. This reign was one of violent convulsions and sanguinary contests, which are represented as too often excited by the vindictive zeal of St. Columba, who is named by the old annalists as the direct promoter of three or four obstinate battles.

CHAPTER V.

IRELAND DURING THE EARLIER ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.



WHILE Ireland was thus receiving the light of Christianity from one end of the island to the other, the neighbouring isle of Britain had changed its masters.

We know literally nothing of the events which occurred in this country from the middle of the fifth to the end of the sixth century, except the uncertain traditions of a later age—these speak of a long series of sanguinary wars, the result of which was the division of the whole portion now known as England into a number of petty kingdoms among Saxons and Angles, of which kingdoms, as in Ireland, one appears generally by the acknowledged power or wisdom of its monarch to have obtained a superior influence over the rest. The relations between the Anglo-Saxons and the Picts of the north, like those with the Britons of the west, were certainly not friendly, though both Britons and Scots had been converted to Christianity before the end of the sixth century; but we have no traces of any intercourse of the Saxons with Ireland till after the conversion of the former by the preaching of the Roman missionaries at the beginning of the seventh century. The pages of the Anglo-Saxon historian Bede furnish the first authentic notices of that island, by a contemporary, or nearly contemporary, writer since the time of the Romans. Unfortunately these notices are brief and unconnected.

Bede informs us that, in the battle of Degsastan, between Ædan, king of the "Scots who inhabit Britain," who had invaded Northumberland with his whole army, and Athelfrid, king of the Northumbrians, fought in the year 603, the Northumbrian king so entirely crushed the power of his enemies, that up to the time when this historian wrote (A.D. 731), they had never raised their heads against the Anglo-Saxons again. Twenty years after this, the kingdom of the Northumbrians had so far extended its power, that it included within its territory the isles of Man and Anglesea, the former of which is

stated in the Irish legends to have received Christianity in the time of St. Patrick. It was naturally with the kingdom of Northumbria that the Irish had their earliest intercourse.

The history of Christianity among the Britons is, if possible, more obscure than that of the conversion of the Irish. That the Gospel had not spread to any great extent in this island during the Romano-British period, seems evident from the circumstance that among the immense number of monuments of every description belonging to that period, which have been found in all parts of England, no article has yet occurred which bears the slightest reference to Christian sentiments and practices. All—and those of the later Roman period are most numerous—bear a character essentially and unmistakeably pagan. The stories of a Romano-British church found in Bede and other later writers, are evidently inventions, and it is not difficult to divine their object. Yet when the Anglo-Saxon history first becomes authentic, at the end of the sixth century, the Britons of Cornwall and Wales, as well as the Irish and Scots, were Christians. In the absence of any satisfactory clue to solve the mystery, we are led to suppose that the Gospel was planted among them by missionaries from the opposite coasts of Spain; and this conjecture is supported by the knowledge we derive from the few early allusions that the Christianity of the Irish and Britons was in many points not orthodox according to the doctrines of the church of Rome. Among the points in which their heterodoxy is most apparent in history, because it was a subject on which the Anglo-Saxon church set great importance, was the question of the correct day for the celebration of Easter. This soon became a subject of bitter hostility between the two churches in the British isles.

As early as the year 605, when the Roman missionaries had but newly established themselves in Britain, where they had immediately entered into communication with the older Christians of the west, we find Laurentius, the successor of Augustine in



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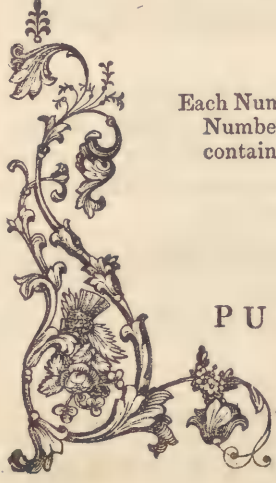
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SIR

The great patronage with which this edition of "HUME AND SMOLLETT'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND" is honoured and the unqualified applause it has received from the Public Press, leave the Proprietors little more to do than to express their satisfaction and gratitude. It has been their anxious wish, that nothing should be omitted, nothing spared that might contribute to render the work what a national chronicle ought to be. The admired narrative of Hume has been carefully adhered to, some obvious oversights corrected, and much additional information supplied, which was not open to the writer when his history was first produced. Since that period, many discoveries connected with the events of other days have been made, and able commentators have arisen to throw new light on facts, then but imperfectly known. The Parliamentary inquiries instituted since the commencement of the present century, have produced much interesting matter long forgotten, and believed to be irrevocably lost. Copious notes, bring before the reader in these volumes, numerous striking and valuable incidents, which from various circumstances were in all former issues sought for in vain, and the result is a vivid, instructive, and faithful picture of the past, well calculated to enable every intelligent reader to form a just estimate of the present.

Never was there a period at which such a study was more likely to be practically useful; for never was there a period when political theorems were more anxiously discussed and tested on a great scale, by awful experiments, "big with the fate" of empires. The fall of monarchy in France, the abrogation of the English Corn Laws, and the contest which the advocates for order and constitutional law have had to sustain in neighbouring states with the champions of anarchical reform, render a theme, always attractive, at the present moment one of paramount importance.

The reader is not expected to rest satisfied on every point with the judgment of one author, faithful and enlightened as he may be deemed. The treasures of other minds, foreign as well as English, have been carefully collected. Without regard to nation, party, or creed, those who have thought most deeply or been in a situation most accurately to describe, have been consulted and quoted where it was judged necessary; ancient chroniclers and modern expositors, Froissart and Monstrelet, Daniel and Baker, D'Israeli, and Guizot, Thiers, and a host of talent beside, have been boldly drawn upon to enrich its columns. Costly engravings, such as never embellished any similar undertaking, convey the most remarkable incidents of our annals, as well as the form and the features of the principal actors in them, to the visual organ as well as to the "mind's eye," and the reader is thus enabled almost at a glance, to find the information he seeks. The date and the reign are seen in every page.

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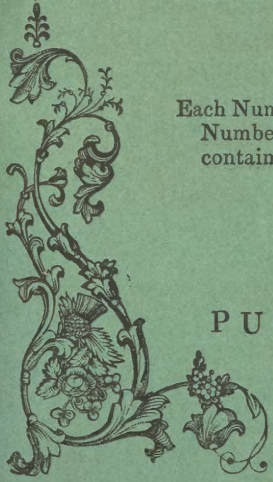
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